







ROMANCES OF EARLY  
AMERICA

---



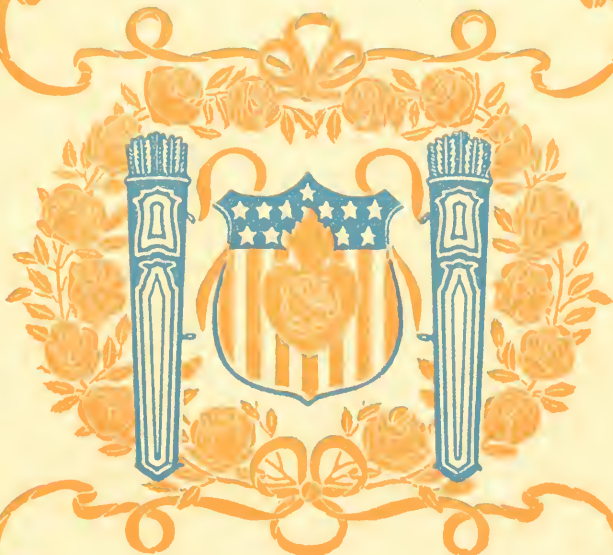






ROMANCES OF  
EARLY AMERICA

*By Edward Robins*



*Anno Domini MCMII*  
George W. Jacobs and  
Company, Philadelphia

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA

E 16  
R-1

---

COPYRIGHT 1902 BY  
GEORGE W. JACOBS & CO.  
PUBLISHED JULY, 1902

---

THE LIBRARY OF  
CONGRESS,  
COPY RECEIVED  
JUL 2 1902  
COPYRIGHT ENTRY  
*Apr. 4. 1902*  
CLASS *a* XXa No.  
*30305*  
COPY B.

W H O R E

W H O R E

1

231

78



## P R E F A C E

---

IT was once said of Americans, in terms of reproach, that they had no past. But they were only in the position of the lad who, when twitted about his youth, answered that he would outgrow the fault, "if given a little time." America is fast outgrowing this fault of extreme youth. The country already has a past of which it may be proud, and one that is full of picturesque. The more it is written about the more interesting it seems, and the greater is the wonder that the New World offers so much pleasant romance to the reader. The age in which we live may be prosaic, and marked by the worship of Mammon, yet the public never showed a livelier appreciation than it does now of the dead-and-gone heroes and heroines who lived and loved, lost or won, in the early days of our history. I trust, therefore, that a place in the bookcase may be found for these "Romances of Early America." The characters of whom they treat faded into shadows many years ago, but the theme of the volume—"the old, old story"—is ever new, and worth the telling.

In addition to such original researches as I have made, it

## P R E F A C E

---

has been my welcome duty to consult a variety of books bearing, either directly or incidentally, upon the subjects of the "Romances." This literature included Watson's chatty *Annals*, Brown's *Beneath Old Roof Trees*, Glenn's *Colonial Mansions*, Mrs. Van Rensselaer's *Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta*, the *Memorial History of New York*, Mrs. Banning's biography of *Miss Vining, a Revolutionary Belle*, Mrs. Ellet's *Women of the American Revolution*, Alger's *Life of Edwin Forrest*, Elias Nason's *Life of Sir Charles Henry Frankland*, Paul Leicester Ford's *The True George Washington*, Jenkins's *Historical Collections Relating to Gwynedd*, the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, edited by John W. Jordan, Maud Wilder Goodwin's *Life of Dolly Madison*, the *American Historical Register*, and Miss Wharton's *Colonial Days and Dames*.

In the preparation of the following pages I have passed many an agreeable hour. I have not written in vain if a small part of my own enjoyment is shared by the reader.

EDWARD ROBINS.

*Philadelphia,*  
*June 1, 1902.*







# CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
I. THE MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE-MAKING: A STORY OF OLD PHILADELPHIA - - - - -	11
II. PEASANT AND PATRICIAN: IN COLONIAL BOSTON - - - - -	35
III. WAR AND FLIRTATION: MISS WISTER AT PENLLYN - - - - -	55
IV. A BELLE OF DELAWARE: MISS VINING, OF WILMINGTON AND DOVER -	85
V. A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE: LEGENDS FROM VIRGINIA - - -	101
VI. CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID: NEW YORK AND HER ROYAL GOVERNORS - - - - -	119
VII. BORN TO BE A REBEL: A PRETTY BOSTONIAN - - - - -	147

## C O N T E N T S

---

	PAGE
VIII. EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE : NEW ORLEANS IN THE "TWENTIES" -	163
IX. AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY : NORTH CAROLINA AND LOYALISM -	183
X. THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK : A PENNSYLVANIA ROMANCE - -	201
XI. WASHINGTON AS A WOOER : SWEET-HEARTS IN VIRGINIA AND NEW YORK - - - - -	219
XII. A QUAKER TRANSFORMED : THE LEADER OF WASHINGTON SOCIETY	239

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

MRS. BENEDICT ARNOLD (PEGGY SHIPPEN)  
AND CHILD, FROM THE PORTRAIT BY SIR  
THOMAS LAWRENCE IN THE COLLECTION  
OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENN-  
SYLVANIA - - - - - *Frontispiece*

THE FRANKLAND MANSION, BOSTON, RESI-  
DENCE OF SIR CHARLES HENRY AND  
LADY FRANKLAND, REDRAWN FROM AN  
OLD PRINT - - - - - *Facing page* 36

SIR CHARLES HENRY FRANKLAND, FROM AN  
ETCHING IN THE POSSESSION OF THE  
BOSTONIAN SOCIETY - - - *Facing page* 50

THE FOULKE HOUSE AT PENLLYN, FROM AN  
ETCHING BY BLANCHE DILLAYE MADE  
FOR "HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS RELA-  
TING TO GWYNEDD," BY HOWARD M.  
JENKINS - - - - - *Facing page* 56

MISS SALLY WISTER, FROM A SILHOUETTE  
PORTRAIT IN THE POSSESSION OF MR.  
CHARLES J. WISTER OF GERMAN-  
TOWN - - - - - *Facing page* 68

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

- GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE, FROM A PAINTING AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY COLONEL TRUMBULL, IN THE TRUMBULL GALLERY AT NEW HAVEN - - - *Facing page* 86
- THOMAS JEFFERSON AS A YOUNG MAN, FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING - - - *Facing page* 102
- THE WHITE HALL, NEW YORK, OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE COLONIAL GOVERNORS OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW YORK, REDRAWN FROM AN OLD PRINT, *Facing page* 120
- A CORNER OF BOSTON IN REVOLUTIONARY DAYS, FROM AN OLD PRINT - *Facing page* 148
- EDWIN FORREST AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-ONE, FROM ONE OF THE EARLIEST PORTRAITS OF THE ACTOR - - *Facing page* 164
- FLORA MacDONALD IN HIGHLAND DRESS, FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING - *Facing page* 184
- GRAEME PARK, THE RESIDENCE OF SIR WILLIAM KEITH, FROM A PAINTING BY I. L. WILLIAMS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA - - - - *Facing page* 202
- MISS MARY PHILIPSE (SISTER OF MRS. BEVERLEY ROBINSON, OF NEW YORK), FROM AN OLD ENGRAVING - - *Facing page* 220
- MRS. JAMES MADISON (DOLLY PAYNE), FROM A PAINTING BY GILBERT STUART IN THE POSSESSION OF RICHARD CUTTS, M. D., WASHINGTON - - - *Facing page* 240







THE MESCHIANZA

---

AND LOVE-MAKING

---



THE MESCHIANZA—AND LOVE-MAKING

**I**T is a bright day of May, in the year of grace 1778, and in the year of American independence 2. Yet no one who is abroad this sunny morning in the tree-lined streets of Philadelphia sees much sign of an independence which defies the power of Great Britain, the former mistress and mother of all the thirteen colonies. For the sober town, once the stronghold of the drab-coated Quaker, is filled with gayly-dressed English officers, resplendent in red cloth and gold lace, while burly privates and lusty sailors, all wearing the uniforms of His Majesty, King George, strut proudly here and there, as they hail some passing tradesman or turn an admiring glance upon a demure maiden who watches them from the vantage of her father's door-step. Surely there are no indications in this display of royal power that America is free to govern herself.

Every one in Philadelphia knows, indeed, that Washington and his half-starved, half-naked troops have been having a sorry winter of it twenty miles away at Valley Forge, while General Sir William Howe and his own men have enjoyed life safely and comfortably housed

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

in the Quaker City. The truth is that Sir William has enjoyed life so well, and taken military matters so placidly, that he has not yet conquered America. So his resignation has been accepted by the disappointed British government, and he is succeeded in command by Sir Henry Clinton.

But what mean all the commotion, the glitter of gold lace, the flashing of swords, the hurrying to and fro of sailors and the excitement of the people of the city? What means the bustle that prevails in the staunch brick houses in the fashionable part of town, where the young women of the first Tory families are indulging in those wonderful mysteries of the toilet? Such a lacing of bodices, mingled with the occasional snap of a stay, and a cry of feminine despair! What a smoothing of gowns and an arranging of headdresses, as fond mammas work like slaves to get Miss Peggy or Miss Lavinia into "genteel" condition, while younger sisters of the beauties look on enviously. Dinah, the black cook, comes upstairs and holds up her ebony hands in mute admiration, as she surveys the results of a month's millinery devising; or perhaps dear papa drops in from his counting-room, feels proud of his daughters, and wonders, poor man, how much all this finery will cost him.

If we visit the Richard Penn mansion where Sir William Howe has his headquarters, on the south side of Market Street below Sixth, we find that tall, florid, good-natured gentleman arraying himself in the full uniform of a Brit-

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

ish general. It is proper that he should so array himself, for he is the cause of all the stir in the streets and of all the dressing in the houses of the "quality." As a parting compliment, ere he returns to England in the rôle of a hero? his officers are to give him a great entertainment which is to go down to history as the Meschianza, or medley. This is why the hearts of the Philadelphia maidens are in such a flutter.

Several of those hearts may secretly beat true for the American cause. Perhaps their possessors, if they were quite logical and consistent, would refuse to take part in the Meschianza. But one should not ask too much of human nature, or of that part of it which loves the color of a military coat, be its wearer friend or enemy. "The British officers have been so polite, my dear." How can any Tory's daughter who is less than superhuman resist the allurements of the coming program, or the entreaties of the aforesaid officers? And then, that dashing John André, who writes such delightful poetry at a moment's notice, and who paints so divinely, is to be there! André! Whenever his name is mentioned even the patriotic Philadelphia girls of Whig families forget, for the nonce, that a Continental soldier ever existed. They cannot help themselves, poor things. To them Captain André typifies all the masculine graces. Nor is he the less interesting because it is whispered that he is in love with the attractive Miss Peggy Chew. They must be a trifle envious of their Tory friends who have accepted

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

invitations to attend the Meschianza, and who flaunt before them the cards or tickets which have been sent for the entertainment. These are impressive pasteboards on which are engraved cannon, flags, a view of the ocean, with the setting sun, the legend "*Vive, Vale,*" and a fine Latin motto: "*Luceo discedens aucto splendore resurgam.*" Only a few, yea, a very few, of the fair recipients comprehend the motto, but all of them vow that it must be something sublime. Unlike the Whigs, they have no qualms about taking part in the coming *fête*. They only hope that the charming British will never leave Philadelphia, nor yield the town to the beggarly, bare-footed Continentals. For let it not be forgotten that among the good people of the place there are some, more particularly those who nourish pretensions to aristocracy, who look upon the Revolution as hopelessly foolish, criminal, and—far worse—distinctly vulgar. They are sorry, indeed, that so gentlemanly a Virginian as Mr. George Washington should have seen fit to take command of a rabble. How much better would he appear in a British uniform!

Morning changes into afternoon. The townspeople, ranging in rank from baker's boy to pompous merchant, hasten towards Knight's wharf, on the river Delaware, at the northern end of the town.<sup>1</sup> Moored out in the broad river are all sorts of curious craft, manned by the sailors from the British men-of-war, who are evidently prepar-

<sup>1</sup> Knight's wharf was at the end of Green Street.

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

ing to receive distinguished visitors. Some of the more adventurous of the Philadelphians clamber into row-boats and push out into the stream, while the rest line the bank. Bees swarming around a hive could not show more animation.

It is now four o'clock. The warm May sun, which has crawled over to the Philadelphia side of the Delaware, is shining down on the many notables who have boarded the craft in the river. There is a group of British officers, laughing as merrily as if they were celebrating some triumph over the Americans, and here is a bevy of beauties from the town. The latter look pretty enough to justify the boast, to be made in later days, that Philadelphia women are the loveliest in the world. All the lacing and powdering and adornment have had a dazzling effect. There is no thought, for the moment, of tired, worried Washington. Gaiety reigns supreme. Englishmen are bending amorously over the witty Jewess, Rebecca Franks, and over Miss Chew, Miss Jane Craig, the Misses Bond, and the rest.

There is to be a regatta as a preliminary to the *fête*. The fleet consists of three divisions. In the van is a galley bearing some of the officers and ladies. Then comes another galley, carrying on its deck Sir William Howe, Admiral Lord Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, the new commander-in-chief, their suites, and more fair women. Another galley, with no less precious freight, brings up the rear. Hovering near the galleys are five flat boats

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

lined with green cloth, which forms a striking background to the gorgeous clothes, both gowns and uniforms, of the occupants. Six barges make a sort of cordon around these vessels, to keep off the recruits from the vulgar herd, who are paddling about in their little row-boats to catch a glimpse of so much aristocracy. In front of the whole line are three *batteaux* filled with musicians who play the airs of old England. All the boats of the fleet are decorated with bunting, as are likewise the ships which are anchored in the river along the whole water-front of the town. At the end of High and other streets, all along the river, the wharves are crowded with spectators, some of whom look on sympathetically, whilst others mutter smothered curses at the sight of so many red-coats fraternizing with the daughters of Americans.

It is half-past four o'clock, or a little later. The galleys, the barges, and the other boats move slowly down the river to the accompaniment of the music. When opposite High Street (now Market Street) wharf the many oarsmen rest. The musicians play "God Save the King," and the men on the ships at anchor burst forth into three cheers. It is a brilliant spectacle. Who in all this crowd surmises that in after years this same old tune of "God Save the King" will be played in the town to the words of "America!" Then, when "God Save the King" is finished, the fleet moves down the river until it reaches the Old Fort fronting the Wharton estate,



## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

near what will, in later times, be called Washington Avenue wharf. No thought of Washington now unless it be as of one who may some day be hung as a traitor to His Most Gracious Majesty, George III.

Here a landing is made, amid much laughter on the part of the ladies, who are afraid of wetting their daintily slippers feet; but gallant assistance from the officers prevents such a catastrophe. H. M. S. *Roebuck* fires a salute of seventeen guns; after the roar has died away there comes a greeting from the cannon of another warship. The party of merrymakers, now safe on land, advance bravely up to a magnificent lawn through an avenue formed by towering grenadiers and light-horsemen. Before them march the musicians and the "managers" of the Meschianza, the latter wearing proudly upon their coats badges of white and blue ribbons. The guests find the lawn edged with troops. For the ladies are rows of benches from which they can watch the tournament that is about to be given in their honor. The Knights of the Blended Rose, representing the cause of seven belles, are about to wage war to the death with the Knights of the Burning Mountain, who will assert the superior beauty and accomplishments of seven other maidens. The ladies thus honored sit in the front benches, wearing (let us hope becomingly) Turkish costumes, capped by turbans in which the favors of their respective champions are pinned conspicuously.

There is a wild blare of trumpets in the distance. The

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

next instant the Knights of the Blended Rose, headed by the debonair Lord Cathcart (who has for his *protégée* Miss Auchmuty, an English girl), come prancing into the lists mounted on gray horses gorgeously caparisoned. The cavaliers are attended by a band of squires, heralds and trumpeters, and are dressed in wonderful garments of red and white silk. One squire holds Lord Cathcart's lance; another carries his shield; two negroes, grinning beatifically in habits of white and blue, with silver clasps upon their shining black necks and arms, hold the champion's stirrups. It is a scene worthy of a mediæval romance. Can it be equaled by any London pageant?

There is much reining-in of the gray horses, and round after round of applause from the spectators. Then, after more blare of trumpets, a herald steps forward into the arena and throws down the gage of battle. Three times does he cry that the ladies championed by the Knights of the Blended Rose are fairer, wittier, and more accomplished than the ladies of any other knights. There is a pause. The young women in the Turkish costumes try to look graceful; the others flirt their fans to and fro and await developments.

Now there is a fresh flourish of trumpets, as the Knights of the Burning Mountain, dressed in black and orange, come riding into the lists. Their herald defies the challengers, throws down the gauntlet, and loudly sets forth the superiority of the ladies who are under the protection of his masters. Captain Watson, the chieftain

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

of these brave knights, has for his lady Miss Rebecca Franks. He flaunts upon his shield a heart; his motto, worthy of some Cœur de Leon, is "Love and Glory." The spectators hold their breath. They almost fancy that the gentlemen of the Blended Rose and the gentlemen of the Burning Mountain are about to fight one another to the death. What a delightful tragedy!

Suddenly there is the crash of battle. Look! The two bands of knights rush madly at each other. Such a clattering of hoofs, neighing of horses, and clashing of shields and lances! Such a tilting, and jousting, and parrying; such an apparent fierceness on the part of the combatants, yet such a skilful avoidance of real danger! It resembles some theatrical spectacle where the contending armies do their work with careful zest. The ladies, particularly the pretty Turks, are enchanted. They seem to be back in the times of the Chevalier Bayard. Quaker Philadelphia has vanished.

There are four savage encounters, ending with much shedding—not of blood, but rather of helmets, and ribbons, and ornaments. Then comes the *pièce de résistance*. Captain Watson and Lord Cathcart, spurring on their horses, rush at each other unattended. There is a collision! The ladies clasp their hands in excitement. Are the two chiefs wounded? Awful thought! No. They have each drawn back, after the first shock, and are at it again with their golden lances. At last, when they look weary and dusty, the marshal of the field

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

rushes between them. "Hold!" he cries. "The ladies of the Blended Rose and the ladies of the Burning Mountain are well pleased with the proofs of valor and loyalty which their respective knights have given so nobly, and now, fully satisfied therewith, they command their knights to desist from further combat!"

So the brave knights, thus passionately adjured, stop the fight, bow low to the audience, and ride out of the lists. The tournament is over; but the *fête* has hardly begun. The dancing, the innocent love-making, the vows of officers who protest all sorts of nonsense, and the half-pleased, half-angry remonstrances of their partners, are yet to come.

It is evening. The company are assembled in the ball-room of a building on the Wharton property. "How beautiful!" exclaim the women, as they are ushered in; "what taste Captain André has, forsooth!" They speak truly. The Captain is a clever painter and designer. The room has been decorated in pale blue, paneled with gold, with festoons of flowers; a dazzling array of mirrors reflect the loveliness of Philadelphia in the light of myriads of wax candles. The music begins. The Knights of the Blended Rose and the Knights of the Burning Mountain tread a minuet with their *protégées*. Then the dancing becomes general. At ten o'clock the windows are suddenly thrown open. A great bouquet of rockets is lighting up the darkness, and the sparks, descending like so many fireflies, fall into the placid ripples

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

of the Delaware. "The Chinese fireworks have begun!" cry the guests. There is a sudden rush to see the display, with many expressions of admiration which cease not until the last rocket has sputtered out its brief, golden life.

The supper follows the display of fireworks. In a large room, elaborately decorated for the occasion with mirrors and candelabra, are tables laden with everything that the Philadelphia markets can supply; not to mention the wine which the well-fed British hosts have brought from abroad for solace and consolation. What a clatter of knives and forks now ensues; what popping of corks and laughter; what tender looks are cast upon the fair ones! How amiable and florid grow the officers, as some of them predict, in their over-confident, British way, that "this beastly war will soon be over," or that "the wretched, ragged rebels will shortly be humbled."

Towards the end of the meal there is a stir. "Make way! Make way!" cry several voices. At this the herald and trumpeters of the Blended Rose enter the room and proclaim the "health of His Most Gracious Majesty, King George, and of the members of the Royal Family." At once chairs are pushed back, the merrymakers rise to their feet, and many a glass is drained in honor of that very obstinate gentleman who is trying to crush out American independence.

What? Can it be that Miss —— is raising her glass, and drinking to the royal toast? Yes; there can be no

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

mistake. But let us not be uncharitable enough to expose the pretty traitor. In a short time, when the Continental army is once more in possession of Philadelphia, she will be only too anxious to forget that she responded to such a bumper. After the toast to Royalty come the healths of the ladies. Then the party, radiant with pleasure, return to the ballroom, where Sir William Howe, looking as jolly as if he were going back to England as a triumphant Cæsar or a conquering Hannibal, is not above joining heavily in the dancing. During an interval in the figures the band plays "Britons, Strike Home!" Had the general a keen imagination, which he has not, he might construe the words, "Britons, Go Home!"

Who is the pretty young girl who tearfully leans out of her window on this eventful evening, as she sees the fireworks from afar, and rails at the unkind fate which has prevented her from going to the Meschianza? It is Miss Peggy Shippen, a daughter of Edward Shippen, one of the best known citizens of Philadelphia. Near her are her two sisters, Miss Sarah and Miss Molly. They, too, are full of woe. Miss Peggy, who is the leading belle of the town, although hardly eighteen years old, was to have had a champion at the tilting, who expected to bear the device of a bay leaf, with "Unchangeable" for his motto. She cannot see the irony of that motto, as applied to herself. She cannot look into the future, to find that she will marry a man who is to prove anything but "unchangeable" to his country. Nor can she look into

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

her horoscope to detect therein the form of Benedict Arnold. Now, however, the young lady and her sisters are not troubling themselves about the future; they are only thinking of the present, with the dancing at the Wharton place, the flirtations, the drinking of toasts, and the merrymaking. All three were to have been there, but at the last minute their cruel papa forbade them to attend. Was there ever such an outrage in all the provinces? The Misses Shippen feel that for them there is no more pleasure in life, as they picture the good times that Becky Franks, Peggy Chew, Nancy White, Becky Bond and all their friends are having, with the red-coated officers bending over them and plying them with the compliments so grateful to the feminine soul! The very thought of it is maddening!<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Shippen cannot be accused of being partial to the Revolutionary cause, but he has decided, at the last moment, that his daughters must stay at home. Several of his friends, prominent Quakers, have visited him on the very day of the *fête*, and have convinced him that it would not be "seemly" for his daughters to appear in the "highly indelicate" Turkish dresses designed for the occasion. Perhaps papa has inspected the costumes, but,

<sup>1</sup> Although the names of the Misses Shippen often appear in the list of guests at the Meschianza, it has been proved that the young ladies were not present. The tradition in the Shippen family shows that their father was the culprit who put an end, as narrated above, to all their brilliant anticipations.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

be that as it may, he has issued his horrible command. No Meschianza for Peggy, or Sally, or Molly! How they storm at those meddling Quakers. How beautiful look the Turkish dresses that they must not wear—more beautiful now than before, like so much forbidden fruit. Well, well! This is what comes of having neighbors who do not attend strictly to their own affairs.

But to return to the entertainment. There is a lady in the ballroom to whom Captain Watson is paying assiduous court. She has dark eyes and hair, with a frank, almost audacious expression, and a mouth that denotes, by a downward curve, a keen sense of humor. She is Rebecca Franks, one of the daughters of David Franks, a Jewish merchant. She has a merry wit, which she never hesitates to use against friends or enemies. In spite of her almost masculine mind she is by no means impervious to British flattery, and she is an avowed Loyalist, or upholder of King George. After the British have left Philadelphia a characteristic story will be related about Miss Franks. Colonel Jack Steward, an American officer, calls upon her, dressed in a suit of red. "I have adopted your colors, my princess," he says, with a bow, "the better to secure a courteous reception. Deign to smile on a *true* knight." Rebecca flushes angrily at the speech, which politely implies that only an English uniform can win her heart. But she is quick to retort: "How the ass glories in the lion's skin!"

We may be sure that Miss Franks is saying something



## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

brilliant to Captain Watson. Near the two is a handsome fellow of aristocratic bearing and fine physique, with a face in which resolution and a certain artistic feeling are attractively blended. The British officers are, for the most part, obstinate and unsympathetic of face, without much indication of brain. They are men who do not seem able to get beyond the standard of a horse-race or a wine-drinking bout. But here is an officer whose eyes beam forth feeling, taste, even genius. You put him down at once, although you do not know him, as a graceful *dilettante* who has an eye for the fine arts, and knows something more than the average narrow-minded soldier. You are correct in this estimate of character. The gentleman is Captain John André. He has a pretty talent for drawing, he can pen dainty verses to the eyebrows of Philadelphia maidens, and he understands how to act in amateur theatricals with the ease, although hardly with the power, of a David Garrick or a Spranger Barry. Has he not, also, painted scenery for the theatre on Cedar (South) Street, where he and his brother officers have acted for the edification of their feminine adorers? Furthermore, he is a brave man who will not hesitate at any sacrifice for his country. No wonder that André is a *beau chevalier*, or that nearly all the girls in the Quaker City, patriots and loyalists alike, have had their heads turned by his grace, his brilliancy of conversation, and his half-courtly, half-easy manners.

This hero, who has had so much to do with making

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

the Meschianza a success, is looking into the high-bred, winsome face of Miss Peggy Chew. All Philadelphia has heard of Miss Chew, the daughter of Chief Justice Benjamin Chew, of "Cliveden," in Germantown. She has been one of the most admired young women at this evening's entertainment, and many a companion has envied her, in having for her knight in the tournament none other than André himself. "No Rival" was his motto, a most fitting and appropriate one. Nay, more than that, is it not whispered, with bated breath, that she is engaged to marry this British officer? He has had an unfortunate love affair over in England, where a certain lady has not smiled on his suit, but he seems to have recovered from this heart-wound, and is gazing at Miss Peggy as if America, not the mother country, claimed his knightly allegiance. One thing, say the gossips, is quite certain. The captain has written some beautiful verses after having seen her charming face framed by a spray of apple blossoms. The poetry is every whit as pretty, they add, as the lines he dedicated to one of the Misses Redman, another local belle, which began:

"Return, enraptured hours,  
When Delia's heart was mine:  
When she with wreaths of flowers  
My temples would entwine."

"How romantic," sigh the gossips, who wish that some André would write verses in their honor.

Thus passes the Meschianza, as night gives place to

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

early morning. In the ballroom the dancing and the music continue; on the lawn, in front of the Wharton house, several couples, weary of the heat and noise within, are walking under the dim light of Chinese lanterns, enjoying the light breeze from the Delaware, and whispering all sorts of pretty nonsense. Among the strollers are André and Miss Chew. Out on the river the signal lights of the war-ships shine steadily. It is just the setting for a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, with André, who can act so well, as *Montague*. No one could ask for a fairer background for the play.

Morning has come. The sun is struggling up from the Jersey horizon, and will soon be shimmering down upon the Delaware. The Meschianza is a thing of the past: it has gone into history, and will give the feminine participants something to talk about until they are become grandmothers, and even great-grandmothers. The Misses Chew, Miss Auchmuty, the sharp tongued Miss Franks, the Misses Redman, the Misses Bond and all the other beauties are sleeping the sleep of worn-out dancers; while many of the gentlemen of the King's Army are toasting them at the coffee-house. These officers, seeing that the time for sleep is passing short, have resolved, with due heroism, to keep up the festivities until duty calls them to barracks or parade-ground. The grounds of the Wharton place look as if they had been struck by a whirlwind. The lanterns, the triumphal arches, the decorations, seem forlorn, lonely, even ghastly.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Let us move on, more than two years after the British have evacuated Philadelphia, until we reach Tappan, New York, on an October day in 1780. In an open field is a baggage-wagon, surrounded by a guard of Continental troops. Around the guard stand other soldiers, with sad faces and moistened eyes. The wagon is drawn up directly under a tree-branch from which hangs an ominous looking rope. From the midst of the soldiers a handsome young man appears, and jumping nimbly upon the wagon, he snatches one end of the rope from the hands of the hangman, opens his shirt-collar, and adjusts the noose about his neck. After all is ready for the gruesome ceremony, the victim lifts the bandage from his eyes. "Gentlemen," he says, in a clear, calm voice, addressing the half-weeping officers who are near the wagon, "I request that you will bear witness to the world that I died like a brave man!" A minute or two later he is beyond the reach of any earthly tribunal. "It will be but a momentary pang!" are his last words.

The dead body which is cut down from the tree is that of the unfortunate John André. Although he has deserved his death as a spy, because of his plotting with Benedict Arnold under the shadow of an American stronghold, yet the very enemies whom he has sought to betray are grieved that so plucky a soldier must die by the gibbet. Yonder, over at the house occupied by General Washington, the blinds have been pulled

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

down. The General is as sorry as any one else, but he has no right to grant a reprieve.

Poor Peggy Chew! There are tragic moments—tears and cries—awaiting you when you learn the fate of André! Treasure up his verses, and recall all that he has said to you, for nothing but a memory is left of your old romance.

Nearly seven years more elapse. The worthy people of Germantown ask themselves if Miss Peggy intends to become an old maid. At last she solves the riddle by marrying General Howard, the hero of the Cowpens—as staunch a patriot as ever faced cannon. The wedding takes place at the Chews' city mansion in Third Street, Philadelphia. General Washington is there, dignified and stately, and makes no reference, naturally enough, to the dead André. In after years Mistress Howard will often speak to her husband of the many virtues and fascinations of her old admirer. It will not be very tactful on the lady's part, although such vanity is pardonable, under the circumstances. Out in Germantown it will be asserted, that there was an actual engagement of marriage between Miss Chew and André.

But General Howard will have no patience for this sort of reminiscence. "He was only a —— spy!" he will cry, brusquely; "nothing but a —— spy!" Can we blame the husband? Old-time flames are not always agreeable to hear of, unless *we* have basked in their warming light. To Howard André was a mere criminal.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

What becomes of Miss Peggy Shippen, who was so cruelly prevented from attending the Meschianza? Let us change the scene to London, in Westminster Abbey, towards the close of the eighteenth century. An American is viewing the monuments in this wonderful old church. Among them is the new cenotaph erected, by command of King George, to the memory of André. As the visitor reads the inscription on it an elderly man, and a woman of under forty, approach the cenotaph. The man has a soured, disappointed expression on his coarse features, although he betrays the air of an aggressive, quarrelsome fellow who perpetually carries a chip upon his shoulder. The woman has been beautiful once upon a time—one glance at her face shows that—but now she is old before she should be, wan, tired, apathetic. She looks like one who expects no more gifts from Fortune; she is resigned to a life of dreariness. The American starts as he recognizes the pair, and then turns away in a sort of horror. For the man with the soured expression is none other than Benedict Arnold. The lady is his wife, the once fascinating Peggy Shippen of Philadelphia. Arnold has been inconstant, and a traitor, but she, at least, has justified the motto of "Unchangeable" which her knight was to have worn for her in the pageant on the banks of the Delaware. She has never faltered in her devotion to her husband. What a change from those happy Philadelphia days! There is no pleasure for her, poor woman, in recalling them,

## MESCHIANZA — AND LOVE — MAKING

---

for their contrast with the present only brings sadness. Does she ever picture the fateful hour when Washington, more sorrowful than angry, saw her in her room at West Point, after the discovery of her husband's treason? She cannot forget how, in her madness of despair, she raved and accused the commander-in-chief of being in a plot to murder her infant child. No; she forgets nothing; but, whatever be her memories, she will be faithful to a faithless soldier until the end.

There is another and more cheerful scene in England which serves as one of the sequels to the Meschianza. It is at Bath, that little world of fashion, in the year 1810 or thereabouts. At the table of a luxuriously furnished dining-room sit a gray-haired military-looking gentleman, a young man (an American), and a stout, elderly lady with fine black eyes and an air of almost youthful animation. The lady, who is evidently the hostess, seems to be a person of wealth and consequence. Looks do not belie her, for she is the gifted and prosperous wife of Sir Henry Johnson, a distinguished officer of the British Army, who is sitting opposite to her at the table. She is asking her visitor, the American, all manner of lively questions about people in Philadelphia. "How are the Chews?" "And the Willings?" "Is old Mr. Pemberton still alive?" "And what has become of Mrs. Bache, the daughter of Dr. Franklin?" There is something familiar about the flash of those eyes, and the almost sarcastic smile that hovers around the mouth. The

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

figure is plumper than of yore, but—yes, there can be no doubt of it. Lady Johnson is our old friend, Rebecca Franks, grown matronly, and very English. She will always have a tender feeling for America, however, and will take pleasure, during the War of 1812, in the victories of her former countrymen. “I am sorry I was a Tory during the Revolution,” she will say. Yet she is very proud of a son who has a commission in the British Army, and who is destined to be killed at the battle of Waterloo.

Thus marry and grow old most of the maidens who have graced the Meschianza. Some, like Mistress Arnold, find life dull tragedy; others turn it into comedy, and keep on smiling until Death tries the latch-string of the door. All vestige of the *fête* has long since vanished. Upon the ground where stood the Wharton mansion, in the vicinity of Fifth Street and Washington Avenue, the city has relentlessly encroached. The once spacious lawn is traversed by built-up thoroughfares. All the beauty which reigned there that night has vanished as a dream, and the Meschianza is but a memory of the past.







PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---







## II

### PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

**T**O the average reader it may seem incomprehensible that there should have been anything of romance or pleasure, of the Old World type, in the domestic history of colonial Boston. We are too prone to look upon this Boston of earlier days as a place filled with stern Puritans who had no passions or human feeling. The town, so we think, must have been as stiff as a newly starched ruff. There all the lights were extinguished at a certain time; there the people walked in one narrow path; there even love-making was conducted on severe, forbidding principles. Yet if we glance into the by-ways rather than into the highways of Boston life we find more than one bit of history which tells us that human nature had her sway even in that stronghold of Puritanism, and that there, as well as in more southern latitudes, the coming of spring sometimes made a "young man's fancy" lightly turn to thoughts of love. Let us take, for example, the novel-like yet true story of Sir Charles Henry Frankland, Baronet, and Agnes Surriage, the humble but lovely maid-of-all-work in a Massachusetts inn. There is in the mere truthful

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

details of their devotion, with its crowning episode of matrimony, enough material for twenty works of fiction.

When Charles Henry Frankland, a young man of twenty-four or twenty-five, a lineal descendant of the redoubtable Oliver Cromwell, (and later to inherit a baronetcy) came over from England in 1741, to accept the lucrative position of Collector of the Port of Boston, he became at once a shining light in the aristocratic circle composed of such families as the Hutchinsons, Apthorps, and Bollans, who represented the influence of the English government in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay. These patricians, who kept quite apart, as a rule, from the hardy settlers who gave such a democratic tinge to the budding life and prosperity of New England, sought their inspiration from the fashionable air of London rather than from the stern, frugal manners of the common people of the colony. With this official world, as a biographer of Frankland has so well pointed out,<sup>1</sup> the chief question of the day was: "How is such and such a thing done at Court?" They preserved the dress and customs of their relatives beyond the sea, affected a knowledge of literature, by reading the *Spectator* and the works of Jonathan Swift, and drove about in their handsome imported coaches, while the ancestors of certain citizens of the town who now rank as aristocrats glanced out upon them deferentially from neighboring shops.

It may be imagined how warmly Frankland was wel-

<sup>1</sup> Elias Nason.



## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

came by this high-born coterie. Rich, good-looking, debonair, with a taste for the arts and amenities of life, and with manners as elegant as those of the famous Lord Chesterfield, he quickly won his way into their hearts. Fathers were glad to claim intimacy with him; fond mammas rejoiced that he was a bachelor; daughters regarded him with a pretty display of maidenly bashfulness. The latter declared that his face was entrancingly pensive, even melancholy, and that he was positively delightful when he arrayed himself in a golden-laced coat, flowered vest, ruffled sleeves and silken breeches, with a three-cornered hat, powdered wig, and a sword to set off the full effect of the costume. Their brothers, who longed to be men about town, like the dandies who paraded through the "Mall" in London, vowed that Frankland could drink his wine as briskly as any subject in the Kingdom, and yet never feel the least harm from his potations. Little did they know that he used for a drinking-cup a vessel so thickly lined inside that he only consumed half as much Madeira or Canary as any one of his boon companions.

In fine, the new Collector of the Port of Boston was regarded as a veritable Prince Charming, and many were the heart-burnings which he caused. Would he eventually return to England a confirmed bachelor, or would he wed some fair maiden who rode proudly through the crooked lanes of Boston? That was the question which nearly all the members of the official set constantly asked

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

of themselves. Meanwhile Frankland was living in princely style. He would, in time, purchase an elaborate brick mansion at what afterwards became the corner of Garden Court and Prince Street (the very house which James Fenimore Cooper has used for a description in one of his novels) besides laying out for himself a costly plantation at Hopkinton. That brick mansion, which has long since gone the way of other historic dwellings, would be considered handsome even in these latter days of lavish architecture. It afforded generous entertainment to a long list of distinguished guests whose names are now forgotten.

At last the gay bachelor was to meet his fate, albeit in a very lowly guise. He was called, one day, upon an official visit to the town of Marblehead, and here put up, no doubt in much pomp and state, at the village inn. While sitting in the public room he noticed, only in a vague way, as befitted so great a personage, that a girl, scarcely more than a child, was engaged in the not over-lofty occupation of scrubbing the floor. There was nothing in the sight worthy of a second thought. But in a moment the girl lifted her head, and what a change! We can readily fancy Frankland giving vent to some old-fashioned exclamation like "Zounds!" or "Oddsbodkins!" To look at that face was to forget all else. Wavy black hair, great dark eyes, pretty features, a superb complexion, and a sweet, refined expression! These were not the customary charms of a scrub-girl.

## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

The future baronet gasped in astonishment. Finally he called the child to him, and she came, neither boldly nor at all embarrassed. He saw that she was about sixteen years old, but slight and delicately built. He spoke to her, and she answered in a melodious, flute-like voice that reminded him of the song of a bird. The Collector grew more and more interested. When he addressed some remark to her in a tone of badinage he found her quite as witty as she was beautiful. Yet she was only the daughter of two humble folk of Marblehead; her dress was worn and scanty and she wore neither shoes nor stockings.

“Here’s a crown for a pair of shoes,” he said at last, handing her a coin. The girl, whose name was Agnes Surriage, took it as any other scrubbing-wench might have done, but with courteous thanks, and went away. Frankland was soon back in Boston, where, we may be sure, he told his friends of the wonderful creature he had seen at the Marblehead inn. Then he straightway proceeded to forget her.

Later on Frankland chanced to make another visit to Marblehead. There, in the inn once more, was Agnes Surriage, still scrubbing away, and still as lovely as ever. But she was barefooted as before.

“Have you not bought shoes with the crown I gave you?” asked the Collector.

“I have indeed, sir,” replied the girl simply, “but I keep the shoes to wear to meeting, may it please you.”

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Never, thought Frankland, had a reply been made with such charming grace. He was captivated, then and there, by the girl. He vowed that one who possessed such a face and bearing should never more waste her sweetness on the desert air of Marblehead. So he sought her parents, and obtained from them permission to send her to Boston to be educated.

Agnes, nothing loath, was soon domiciled with a family in Boston. There she received the best training that the town could afford. As the aforesaid training included, in addition to the "Three R's," such abstruse and varied sciences as music, grammar, dancing and embroidery, we may infer that the intellectual preeminence of the city had already begun. Under the influence of such an array of learning the girl blossomed into radiant womanhood, with graces that would have done credit to a duchess, and a half-dark, half-rosy beauty of which few duchesses could boast. People marveled at the distinction of one who had been brought up to scrub the floors of an inn. Perhaps, after all, there flowed blue blood in the veins of Agnes Surriage. Could we take a genealogical microscope, and examine far back into the family tree of the Surriages, we might find some wicked Plantagenet, a stray marquis, or a gay duke, concealed in the trunk.

There was one person who watched the development of this flower from Marblehead first with interest, then with wonder, and at last, with deepest love. The proud

## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

scion of one of the noblest families in the north of England one day woke up to find that he had lost his heart to the ex-servant. He quite forgot her former badge of servitude when he looked into her great eyes, or watched the piquant play of her features, or listened to the tones of her thrush-like voice. He only knew that he loved her as he had never loved any of the great belles of his acquaintance. Then he told her so, quite as humbly as if he had been paying court to a sovereign.

How felt Agnes Surriage? She returned that love with all the devotion of her ardent nature. She no longer looked upon Charles Henry Frankland as a benefactor; she now regarded him as her lover. And as her future husband? Who shall answer that question? For a time her romance suggests

“ The old, old story—fair and young,  
And fond—and not too wise,—  
That matrons tell with sharpened tongue.”

When Agnes went to church of a Sunday in King's Chapel, looking a picture of loveliness in a gown lately brought over from London, the ladies of the fashionable set cast upon her curious glances, wherein scorn and grudging admiration had equal combination. She, regardless of the attention she was attracting, listened patiently to the sermon of the English divine, or else prayed earnestly. And, sinner though she might be, her prayers were more heartfelt, perhaps, and more heeded, than those of the virtuous ladies who could scarce stifle

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

their yawns until service should be over. Then, when church was out, what a staring at Miss Surriage as she passed out into the street!

Thus life went on as the two lovers read together Steele, and Richardson, Swift, Addison and Pope, or cultivated flowers, and enjoyed the music in which they both were so proficient. At last we find that Sir Charles Henry Frankland has resigned his position as Collector of the Port of Boston, and returned to England. Through the death of an uncle he has now become a baronet. Next he is living in Lisbon, Portugal, which, notwithstanding its churches and its fondness for ecclesiastical pomp, is one of the most corrupt cities on the face of the globe. There, too, is the constant Agnes. She is glad to get away from England, where she was coldly received.

It is the first day of November, 1755—a date long to be remembered in the annals of all that is horrible in history. But there is nothing ominous in the sun which is shining this morning over the hills of the city, gilding the spires, and domes and housetops, and touching softly the sails of the boats on the lazy waters of the river Tagus. The streets are filled with crowds of people on their way to mass. For it is All Saints' Day, one of the most elaborate festivals, as kept by the Portuguese, in the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church. Already the bells have ceased to ring; the hurrying worshipers are kneeling in their respective temples; the priests are

## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

reciting the Latin of the mass. Suddenly an awful sound is heard. It is not exactly a roar, but a sickening, crackling sound. People rush screaming out of the churches only to find that the sun is darkened and that buildings are tumbling down in every direction. The earth is quaking, as if at any moment the whole city might be swallowed up in her bowels; men are flying here, there, anywhere, their faces blanched, their minds distraught, crazed; and the streets are soon filled with the dead or the dying who have been crushed beneath falling walls. For twenty minutes the earth continues to tremble, as "the waters of the Tagus roll into the sea, leaving vessels on the naked ground, and then come foaming, rushing back," and sweep a crowd of frantic people on the new marble quay to swift destruction. The loss of life and property is terrific. So violent are the shocks of earthquake on that fatal Saturday that the splendid palace of the King, the Custom House, India House, new opera houses, as many as thirty churches, and almost all the stores and dwelling-houses, are in ruins, and nearly thirty thousand people are crushed and killed beneath them. "As if to add to the horror of this dreadful scene the prisoners are let loose, and then incendiary fires spring up on every hand." Fortunately for the King of Portugal and his court, they are at Belem, just without the city, at the time when the catastrophe occurs.

On this very morning Frankland has driven out in company with a gay lady residing in the city. The two are

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

decked in their best, for they are on their way to the Cathedral. As they bowl along they chat merrily; life is bright; the future seems secure. At the moment that the terrific earthquake begins, about half-past ten o'clock, the baronet is passing the house of one Francesco de Ribeiro. Suddenly he feels as if he is the victim of a hideous nightmare: the earth is heaving under him like the waves of old ocean; walls begin to tremble and fall, and people to shriek out in agony. Another minute, and the house of Ribeiro has enveloped him, his driving companion, the horses and the carriage in its ruins. The lady, in her awful pain and fear, bites through the sleeve of his broadcloth coat and tears a piece out of his arm. The horses are soon dead; their almost human groans are stifled forever. There lie the two occupants of the carriage, who were so full of merriment but a second before. Will help never come? Frankland, lying there prostrate, bleeding, prays to the Almighty for mercy, as his sins, of which there are not a few, come crowding into his memory like so many evil, haunting spirits. He "makes a solemn vow to God, that if He will show him pity, to lead henceforth a better life, and especially to atone for wrongs done to Agnes Surriage." It is one of those soul-stirring moments vouchsafed to few men who live to tell the story.

And where is the faithful Agnes Surriage, whose honor the stricken baronet has sworn to redeem in the eyes of the world? She, too, is in Lisbon, whither she has gone



## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

out of love for the man who rescued her from the life of a scrubbing wench in a mean New England inn. When the city is convulsed by this upheaval her one thought is for Frankland. Regardless of danger, oblivious of her own safety, she runs through the ghastly streets, strewn with dead or dying, and comes by sheer good fortune, (or is it love that leads the way?) in front of the fallen house of Francesco de Ribeiro. Here she recognizes the hoarse voice of her lover calling for help. Here, too, she hears the fainter voice of his companion. Some Portuguese workmen, uninjured by the havoc around them, are lingering in the neighborhood, with true Southern aimlessness. "Save Sir Charles Frankland," Agnes cries loudly in anguish, in a voice which for once has lost its customary sweetness, "and a great reward in gold shall be yours!"

The men, spurred on by the hope of reward, strain every nerve to rescue the two from the débris. Agnes, fearful, yet as calm as in the days when she first saw her lover at Marblehead across the sea, encourages them by word and gesture until, after an hour's work, they bring forth the baronet and the lady. The two are alive, and not seriously hurt, though covered with the stones and dusty mortar of Ribeiro's stricken house. Never has Agnes, pale though she is, looked handsomer than at this instant. An artist might well paint the look which she fastens upon Frankland, as the bleeding aristocrat is dragged into the light of day. There is a look no less full of meaning on

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

his face also. For, in spite of all things, their love for each other is as great as in the old days in Boston. When he is taken away, that he may have his wounds dressed, Frankland does not forget the vow he has made less than two hours before.

A few days later he writes in his diary—a diary, be it noted, that is still in existence—"I hope my providential escape will have a lasting good effect upon my mind. We should endeavor to pacify the Divine wrath by sorrow for past neglects, and a future conscientious discharge of our duty to God and our country." And, with that laudable ambition in view, Sir Charles Henry is married to Agnes Surriage by a priest of the Roman church. Then he embarks with his bride for England, and to make the marriage bonds more binding if possible, he has the ceremony performed on board ship by a clergyman of the Church of England. When he arrives in his own country the members of his family and the noble circle in which they move salute the new Lady Frankland as the embodiment of all the graces. She comes now as a wife, and they forget the past. The Franklands, the Pelhams, the Pitts, the Walpoles and the rest rave over the beauty and the accomplishments, the sweet disposition and the wonderful voice of the ex-domestic. If they do not condemn her spelling (which was somewhat shaky until the last day of her life) it is because even the greatest men of the eighteenth century were not adepts in the genteel art of putting the right

## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

letter in the right place. Spelling was, more or less, a matter of taste rather than of rule. As for Agnes—well, she is now Lady Frankland, and happier than she ever was before. One of the prayers which she was wont to offer in the King's chapel, far away in Boston, has been answered.

After another trip to Lisbon the Franklands find themselves once more in Boston. Agnes is no longer looked upon with contemptuous eyes; the very women who once treated her so scornfully now rush to pay her their homage. But she, taking the world as it comes, goes on being as attractive as of old without pride or ostentation, and proves quite as friendly to her humble relatives, the Surriages, as she is to her guests in velvet and silken attire. When her brother, Isaac Surriage, a plain seaman, stops in at the Franklands' magnificent residence in Bell Alley, he is always sure of a hearty welcome. Perhaps it is because he has the tact to time his visits so that he will not annoy any of the official set. We may be sure, however, that the dandies and fine ladies of Boston are quite ready to stamp as "charming" any kinsman of Lady Frankland. What might once have been accounted want of breeding in Isaac Surriage is now nothing more than the most delightful eccentricity. Thus can we color our opinions of men and things to suit our mood, or our interest.

The years roll on prosperously. The happy couple pay another visit to Portugal; then they come back to

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Boston, and at last (1764) they settle in Bath, England. Here Sir Charles Henry, who now considers himself old and sedate, tries to bring back declining health by a plentiful consumption of the celebrated waters of the great spa. "I endeavor to keep myself calm and sedate," reads an entry in his diary at this time. "I live modestly and avoid ostentation, decently and not above my condition, and do not entertain a number of parasites who forget favors the moment they depart from my table."

Nowadays a man who has not passed the fifty-year post on time's turnpike usually considers himself to be comparatively young; but in the eighteenth century men lived harder, and abused their digestions more than they do now, so that they often became prematurely old. English prigs of twenty, who frequented Drury Lane Theatre to ogle the occupants of the boxes, or to shout out "Egad, I call this a bad play," were more *blasé* than the average modern Englishman of three times that age. Frankland is hardly an example of such precocity. But he had enjoyed life, not forgetting the good things of the table, and was now receiving earthly punishment therefor in the shape of the gout, that melancholy visitor who always causes us to view the world through dull, blue glasses. The gout conquered him in due time, for he died early in the year 1768. Agnes, who had loved and faithfully tended him so long as life lasted, buried him in a village near Bath and placed upon his tombstone a



*H. Frankland*



## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

quaint inscription. Then she quietly went back to her old home in New England, there to live in much magnificence at Hopkinton, the country estate of the deceased baronet. It was a home fit for the finest lady in England.

Upon the outbreak of the Revolution, in 1775, the friends of American liberty began to look upon Lady Frankland with suspicion. Though not an aristocrat by birth, she was at least one by marriage; her friends were, for the most part, staunch Tories, and her sympathies, no doubt, were running in the same direction. It is certain that she fast became unpopular, and that she determined to seek a refuge in England, with the family of her dead husband. So she applied to the Committee of Safety, while she was still residing at Hopkinton, for permission to enter Boston, now held by the British troops, that she might sail from there for her future home. The request was granted, with leave to pass into the beleaguered town with six trunks, three beds, one "small keg of pickled tongues," two pigs (why, oh why, should a heroine of romance travel with two pigs?) a quantity of boxes, and other "necessaries." But on her way from Hopkinton her carriage was stopped by armed militiamen, and she was held in custody as a suspicious character, dangerous to the American cause! Her beauty, much of which she still retained, was no avail against the stern mandate of these patriots. The influence of Lady Frankland in the country of her birth had departed. Mars, not Cupid, was now king. The Continental Congress,

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

however, more gallant and less suspicious than the militiamen, overruled the action of the latter, and sent the lady into Boston, almost in triumph, under the protection of a guard of six soldiers, in company with the six trunks (no doubt crammed with London finery), the three beds, the pickled tongues, the prosaic pigs, and the other "necessaries." At once the British officers, among them John Burgoyne, who was to prove to the world that a successful playwright may make an incompetent general, paid their court to the newcomer. In spite of her fifty odd years, thought these gentlemen, Lady Frankland was as fascinating as many an English woman but half her age. Here was one fair American, at least, whom they could admire and treat without that boorishness which sometimes accompanied their manners, or the want thereof, on this side of the water.

In the course of this pleasurable experience occurred the battle of Bunker Hill, which first showed to the astonished Britons that Americans were not a rabble of cowards. Lady Frankland watched the engagement from the roof of her old house in Bell Alley, and, when all was over, assisted in caring for the wounded soldiers who were brought into the town. Surely that kind heart of hers must have bled, even though she made no sign, for her own countrymen who had fought so stoutly against the well-trained British regulars. Soon after the battle she took ship for England. She was never more to see the New World.



## PEASANT AND PATRICIAN

---

It might have been supposed that the widow would put an appropriate close to the romance of her life by dying with the name of Charles Henry Frankland upon her lips. Perhaps she did, for she had loved him with a love seldom seen outside of the old-fashioned three-volume novel. But my Lady so far forgot the proprieties and rules laid down by authors of fiction as to wed, when she was on the verge of sixty, a certain wealthy English banker, one John Drew. Her second season of married life was short, however, for her death occurred the following year (1783). But Lady Frankland's devoted love will never be forgotten. So long as Americans take interest in pictures of the past—and let us hope that such interest will only increase as the years roll on—the memory of Agnes Surriage, Lady Frankland, will endure. She will ever make a very human figure against the prim background of New England colonial life.

The manorial house at Hopkinton was destroyed by fire many years ago, but as long as it stood, a mute illustration of the story of the Franklands, visitors were shown a certain room which was regarded in the neighborhood with a particular reverence. Here, says the legend, Sir Charles Henry shut himself up on more than one All Saints' Day, the anniversary of the Lisbon earthquake, to spend the long hours behind closed shutters, in prayer and penitential fasting. Then he returned to his wife. To him she always continued as young as she

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

was on the morning when he first saw her scrubbing floors in the Marblehead inn. A right noble gentleman was Sir Charles Henry Frankland. We may forgive him his sins for the good that was in the man.

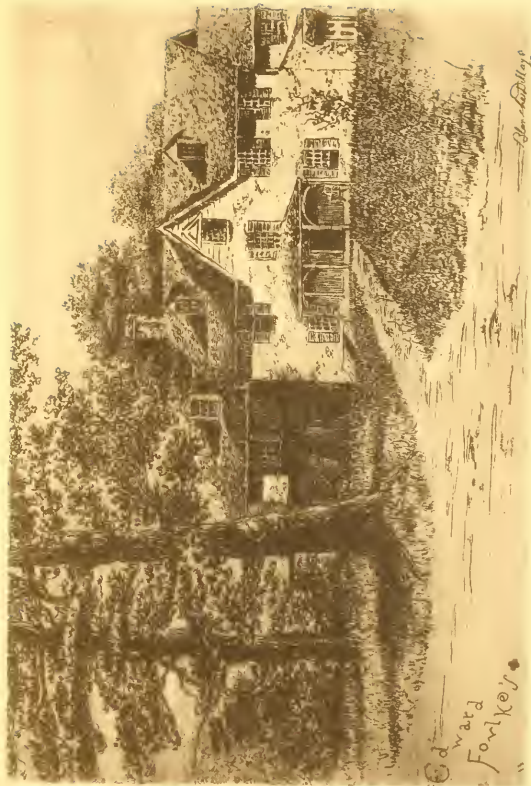




WAR AND FLIRTATION

---





Edw  
Fowler  
Paw  
"No. 1000"

No. 1000





### III

## W A R A N D F L I R T A T I O N

---

**I**F the historian desires to get a graphic idea of the lives of our ancestors, and would find out that those worthies were quite like other human beings who dwell in a more modern atmosphere, let him dip into the diaries which some of them have left behind as attractive relics of the past. It is from such unambitious memorials that we obtain many a social fact, many a picturesque incident, which we would look for in vain in the pages of a Bancroft. It is the very unpretentiousness of these yellow-leaved records that charms us.

Nothing of this kind is better in its way than the diary of Sally Wister, a Quaker maiden of Philadelphia, wherein the Revolutionary characters she introduces seem to be breathing, sentient creatures, and wherein, too, we have a glimmer of romance which nowadays would be described as flirtation. Miss Wister, who was the eldest daughter of Daniel Wister, was a vivacious girl of sixteen, sparkling with health and spirits, at the time that this diary was begun. She had just moved with her family from Philadelphia to Penllyn, Montgomery County, when it became evident, after the battle of the Brandy-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA.

---

wine, that the British would occupy the Quaker City. At this interesting period Miss Sally resided on the Foulke estate, a portion of which still remains on one side of the North Pennsylvania Railroad, near Penllyn station. The whole neighborhood is filled with memories of the Revolution. If we wander along the old Morris Road, or loiter on the banks of the upper Wissahickon with Miss Sally's diary in hand, we almost expect to see the writer herself appear until we hear the rumbling of a train or the screech of a locomotive, when we realize that we are living in the twentieth century.

Miss Wister was at a very *naïve*, impressionable age, and her heart was thrilled by the excitement into which the whole country surrounding Philadelphia was thrown by the manœuvring of British and American troops. What better way to ease her feelings, therefore, than to keep a journal? Miss Sally had a dear friend, Deborah Norris (afterwards the wife of Dr. George Logan, of Stenton), and, as it was impossible for her to send a letter to Miss Deborah, then in Philadelphia, Sally resolved to record the passing events of each day on paper, with the hope that some time later her friend might derive pleasure from their perusal. Under date of September 26, 1777, she writes:

“About twelve o'clock Cousin Jesse [Foulke] heard that General Howe's army had moved down towards Philadelphia. Then, my dear, our hopes and fears were engaged for thee. However, my advice is, summon all

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

thy resolution, call Fortitude to thy aid, don't suffer thy spirits to sink, my dear; there's nothing like courage; 'tis what I stand in need of myself, but unfortunately have little of it in my composition. I was standing in the kitchen about twelve, when somebody came to me in a hurry screaming, 'Sally, Sally, here are the light horse!' This was by far the greatest fright I had endured; fear tack'd wings to my feet; I was at the house in a moment; at the porch I stopped, and it really was the light horse. I ran immediately to the western door, where the family were assembled, anxiously waiting for the event. They rode up to the door and halted, and enquired if we had horses to sell; but were answered negatively. 'Have not you sir,' to my father, 'two black horses?' 'Yes, but have no mind to dispose of them.' My terror had by this time nearly subsided. The officer and men behaved perfectly civil; the first drank two glasses of wine, rode away, bidding his men to follow, which, after adieus in number, they did."

Almost as Miss Sally was writing these lines the British were taking possession of Philadelphia. From now onward the Foulke mansion became a stopping-place for American officers, many of whom were only too glad to chat with the pretty chronicler and to admire her coy ways and attractive little impertinences. The young lady herself had a keen eye for the good points of the soldiers. As she sits down in the evening, to make an entry in the all important journal, we fancy that she

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

blushes over the thought of some compliment or tender word of which she has been the object during the day. When General Smallwood and the officers of his staff took up quarters in the house there was great excitement, and not a little fluttering of the heart, on the part both of Miss Sally and her cousin, Lydia Foulke. To be under the same roof with so many interesting men, some of them eligible bachelors, was "prodigious good fun!"

"The General," wrote Sally, "is tall, portly, well made: a truly martial air, the behavior and manner of a gentleman, a good understanding and great humanity of disposition, constitute the character of Smallwood. Colonel Wood, [subsequently Governor of Virginia] from what we hear of him, and what we see is one of the most amiable of men. . . . Colonel Line is not married, so let me not be too warm in his praise, lest thee suspect. He is monstrous tall and brown, but has a certain something in his face and conversation very agreeable; he entertains the highest notions of honor, is sensible and humane, and a brave officer. He is only seven-and-twenty years old, but, by a long indisposition and constant fatigue, looks vastly older, and almost worn to a skeleton, but very lively and talkative. Captain Furnival—I need not say more of him than that he has, excepting one or two, the handsomest face I ever saw, a very fine person; fine light hair, and a great deal of it, adds to the beauty of his face. Well, here comes the glory, the Major,—[Major Stoddert, of Maryland, after-

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

wards Secretary of the Navy] so bashful, so famous, etc. ; he should come before the Captain, but never mind. I at first thought the Major cross and proud, but I was mistaken; he is about nineteen, nephew to the General. . . . Captain Finley is wretched ugly, but he went away last night, so I shall not particularize him. . . . Colonels Wood and Line and [Dr.] Gould dined with us. I was dressed in my chintz, and looked smarter than night before."

A true feminine touch, Miss Sally, is in that last sentence. We can fancy you sitting up very straight at the dinner-table, as you pretend to serene unconsciousness of the admiring glances that are being showered upon you in that chintz dress.

It is not long before Major Stoddert recovers from his bashfulness, and is getting on famously with the demure young woman. It is plain, too, that she thinks him a sort of paragon. "I must tell thee," she confides to Miss Deborah Norris, under a date in October, "to-day arrived Colonel Guest [probably Mordecai Gist], and Major Leatherberry, the former a smart widower; the latter a lawyer, a sensible young fellow, and will never swing for want of tongue. Dr. Diggs came second day; a mighty disagreeable man. We were obliged to ask him to tea. He must needs pop himself between the Major and me, for which I did not thank him. After I had drank tea, I jumped from the table, and seated myself at the fire. The Major followed my example, drew

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

his chair close to mine and entertained me very agreeably. Oh, Debby, I have a thousand things to tell thee. I shall give thee so droll an account of my adventures that thee will smile. 'No occasion of that, Sally,' methinks I hear thee say, 'for thee tells me every trifle.' But, child, thee is mistaken, for I have not told thee half the civil things that are said of us *sweet* creatures at 'General Smallwood's quarters.'"<sup>1</sup>

Truly some of the girls of a century and a quarter ago were not a whit more sanctimonious than the girls of to-day. Again Miss Sally writes: "The Major and I had a little chat to ourselves this eve. No harm, I assure thee; he and I are friends. This eve came a parson belonging to the army. He is (how shall I describe him?) near seven foot high, thin, and meagre, not a single personal charm, and very few mental ones. He fell violently in love with Liddy [Foulke] at first sight; the first discovered conquest that has been made since the arrival of the General. . . . When will Sally's admirers appear? Ah! that indeed. Why, Sally has not charms sufficient to pierce the heart of a soldier. But still I won't despair. Who knows what mischief I yet may do?"

"A most charming day. I walked to the door and received the salutation of the morn from Stoddert and

<sup>1</sup>The reader who would know something of the neighborhood in which Miss Sally lived at this time should consult the researches of Mr. Howard M. Jenkins.

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

other officers. As often as I go to the door, so often have I seen the Major. We chat passingly, as 'A fine day, Miss Sally.' 'Yes, very fine, Major.'

"Another very charming conversation with the young Marylander. He seems possessed of very amiable manners, sensible and agreeable. He has by his unexceptional deportment engaged my esteem."

It begins to look, Miss Sally, as if the Major's bashfulness has disappeared entirely, and as if your "esteem," as you quaintly call it, meant something more than is implied by that highly decorous word. But to continue the diary:

"The General, Colonels Wood, Guest, Crawford and Line, Majors Stoddert [Miss Sally always spells it Stodard, by-the-way] and Leatherberry dined with us to-day. After dinner, Liddy, Betsey [Wister], and thy smart journalizer, put on their bonnets to take a walk. We left the house. I naturally looked back; when, behold, the two majors seemed debating whether to follow us or not. Liddy said, 'We shall have their attendance,' but I did not think so. They opened the gate and came fast after us. They overtook us about ten poles from home, and begged leave to attend us. No fear of a refusal. They enquired if we were going to neighbor Roberts's? . . . We altered the plan of our ramble, left the road, and walked near two miles thro' the woods. Mr. Leatherberry, observing my locket, repeated the lines:

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,  
That Jews might kiss and infidels adore.”

“I replied my trinket bore no resemblance to a cross. ‘Tis something better, madame.’ ‘Tis nonsense to repeat all that was said; my memory is not so obliging; but it is sufficient that nothing happened during our little excursion but what was very agreeable, and entirely consistent with the strictest rules of politeness and decorum. I was vexed a little at tearing my muslin petticoat. I had on my white dress, quite as nice as a first-day in town. We returned home safe. Smallwood, Wood and Stoddert drank tea with us, and spent the greater part of the evening. I declare this gentleman [no need to interpose that Miss Sally means Stoddert] is very, very entertaining, so good-natured, so good-humored,—yes, so sensible; I wonder he is not married. Are there no ladies formed to his taste?”

Fie! Miss Sally! Do you not know of at least one lady who is formed to the Major's taste?

Well, all this game of flirtation is interrupted by the departure of Smallwood and his staff from Penllyn early in November. “The Major looks dull,” plaintively chronicles Miss Sally, in announcing that the officers are about to leave. Perhaps the Major is only a very good actor, and thinks it more polite to go about with the air of a distraught hero in bombastic tragedy. When he bids the girl farewell he is much affected; he lowers his pleasant voice almost to a whisper as he says: “Good-bye,



## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

Miss Sally." As for the latter, her heart is full. "Farewell, ladies, till I see you again!" cries the Major, mounting his horse and cantering off towards the Morris Road. "Amiable Major!" "Clever fellow!" remark the Wisters and Foulkes who watch regretfully the retreating figure of the officer. "I wonder if we shall ever see him again," sighs Miss Sally, who feels rather dreary, poor thing.

When, several weeks after the Major has joined the forces of Washington at White Marsh, there arrive at the Foulke house two Virginia officers, Miss Sally is in no mood to appreciate them. How can Lieutenants Lee and Warring be compared with Major Stoddert? "Lee," she records, "is not remarkable one way or the other; Warring an insignificant piece enough. Lee sings prettily, and talks a great deal;—how good turkey hash and fried hominy are (a pretty discourse to entertain the ladies); extols Virginia, and execrates Maryland, which, by-the-way, I provoked them to; for though I admire both Virginia and Maryland, I laughed at the former, and praised the latter, and I ridiculed their manner of speaking. I took a great delight in teasing them. I believe I did it sometimes ill-naturedly; but I don't care. They were not, I am certain almost, first-rate gentlemen. (How different from those other officers.) But they are gone to Virginia, where they may sing, dance, and eat fried hominy and turkey hash all day long, if they choose. Nothing scarcely lowers a man, in my opinion, more than talking of eating."

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

It is on the sixth of December that Major Stoddert returns to Penllyn in a highly romantic and therefore, to Miss Sally, a very interesting state. He has had a severe fever, brought on by the fatigue of camp life and exposure to the night air, and he can scarcely walk. How pale he looks, yet how charming will it be for a certain maiden to help him back to health!

The next day the Major announces that he is "quite recovered." "Well," says Miss Sally, half-laughingly, "I fancy this indisposition hath saved thy head this time." "No, ma'am," replies the officer, who would not be accused, even in the spirit of fun, of playing the invalid for the sake of his life; "for if I hear a firing I shall soon be with the troops!" The girl is thrilled. "That was heroic!" she says, and she signalizes the return of the wandering Major by decking herself out in a new and very much "grown-up" gown of silk and cotton. "I feel quite awkwardish, and prefer the girlish dress," she explains; but we may be sure that she kept one of her bright eyes pinned on the soldier's face, to discover what he would think of the silk and cotton.

One evening following this incident, Miss Sally and Miss Liddy Foulke are having a very delightful time in the drawing-room, talking to the convalescent Major, who seems in no hurry to eschew the sirens of Penllyn. Perhaps Miss Sally wishes Miss Liddy would make it convenient to leave the—but no matter! Suddenly the former asks the Major if he will return to tell them

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

about the next battle in which he will be engaged. "I certainly will, ma'am," he says devotedly, "if I am favored with my life." Sally must catch her breath at the awful contingency, while the Major, the sly dog, is doubtless anxious she should have a keen idea of the uncertainty of human life, and of his life in particular. Then Miss Liddy, who is either very tactless or a great tease, blurts out that there is a man in the kitchen who has just come from the army. Up jumps Stoddert. He is only too anxious to hear news from his companions in arms, who are soon to break camp at White Marsh and march to Valley Forge. "Good-night to you, ladies," he says, as his manly form disappears through the drawing-room doorway.

"Liddy, thee hussy," angrily cries Miss Sally; "what business had thee to mention a word of the army? Thee sees it sent him off. Thy evil genius prevailed, and we all feel the effects of it."

"Lord bless me," pleads Liddy Foulke, "I had not a thought of his going, or for ten thousand worlds I would not have spoke."

The Major returns no more that night, and Miss Sally becomes so "low-spirited" that she can "hardly speak."

Once, some days later, the Major hears the sound of platoon firing. The occupants of the Foulke mansion rush out excitedly into the road. The two armies, they declare, must be engaging each other; perhaps General Howe has come out from his cozy quarters in Philadel-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

phia to attack General Washington. The Major, still an invalid, says quietly to one of the Wister servants: "Will you be kind enough to saddle my horse? I shall go!"

"It is nothing but skirmishing with the flanking parties," observes a gentleman. "Do not go, Major!" "Oh, Major," cries Miss Sally, forgetting her prudence, "*thee* is not going?" "Yes, I am, Miss Sally," says the officer, bowing low, and doubtless relishing the heroic light in which Sally is regarding him. He goes out into the highway, bent on battle. She expects to see him brought back a corpse. But the firing ceases, and the Major is persuaded to return to the house. It has been only a skirmish, after all. Sally is charmed. "Ill as he was," she writes, "he would have gone. It showed his bravery, of which we all believed him possessed of a large share."

Next the Major goes off to join the troops encamped at Valley Forge. "I don't think we shall see him again," Sally confides to Miss Deborah Norris. In the meantime two more officers arrive on the scene. They are a Captain Lipscomb and a Mr. Tilly. The Captain is "tall, genteel," with a "softness" in his countenance that is "very pleasing," and with light, shining auburn hair which delights all feminine beholders. Although he is not a "lady's man," Miss Sally finds him "perfectly polite." She thus sketches the appearance of Tilly: "He seems a wild, noisy mortal, tho' I am not much acquainted with him. He appears bashful when with girls.



MISS SALLY WISTER



## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

We dissipated the Major's bashfulness, but I doubt we have not so good a subject now. He is above the common size, rather genteel, an extreme pretty, ruddy face, hair brown, and a sufficiency of it, very great laughter, and talks so excessively fast that he often begins a sentence without finishing the last, which confuses him very much, and then he blushes and laughs. . . . While we sat at tea, the parlor door was opened; in came Tilly; his appearance was elegant; he had been riding; the wind had given the most beautiful glow to his cheeks. Oh, my heart, thought I, be secure! The caution was needless; I found it without a wish to stray."

Evidently Miss Sally's heart had no idea of straying when it gave room to the absent Major. "I am vexed at Tilly," resumes the young lady. "He has a German flute, but does nothing but play the fool. He begins a tune, plays a note or so, and then stops. After a while he begins again; then stops again. 'Will that do?' he asks, and bursts into an inane laugh. He has given us but two regular tunes since he arrived. I am passionately fond of music. How boyish he behaves!"

While Tilly is making an idiot of himself on the German flute the Major comes prancing back to the Foulke house. He has seemingly not relished the idea of camping at Valley Forge, and has found some excuse to return to the sprightly presence of Miss Wister. The latter is entranced. Stoddert takes quick measure of the piping Tilly, and concludes that this gentleman will make

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

an excellent subject for a joke. While the girl is darning an apron—for the ladies of quality in those days were not above mending—the beau (he should have been starving at Valley Forge, the rogue!) is complimenting her upon her handiwork. “Well, Miss Sally,” he asks, “what would you do if the British were to come here?”

“Do?” exclaims Miss Sally, with a pretty little shiver. She knows the British are still in Philadelphia. “I should be frightened just to death!”

The Major laughs, and says that if the enemy comes he will hide himself behind the figure of a British grenadier which stands on the first landing of the stairway. It is unusually well executed, six feet high, and makes a martial appearance.<sup>1</sup> A happy thought strikes the waggish Major. “Of all things,” he says, “I should like to frighten Tilly with the figure.” So a plan is soon arranged, amid much whispering and giggling, to test the courage of the unsuspecting Tilly. The British grenadier is placed at a point of vantage in the hallway, and Tilly, being brought face to face with it, and hearing one of the conspirators cry, in a thundering voice, “Are there any rebel officers here?” promptly turns to the right about. “Not waiting for a second word, he darted like lightning out of the front door, through the yard, and bolted o’er the fence. Swamps, fences, thorn-

<sup>1</sup> This figure was afterwards removed to the house of Mr. Charles J. Wister, in Germantown.



## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

hedges and ploughed fields in no way impeded his retreat." The woods echoed with "Which way did he go?" "Stop him!" "Surround the house!"

"The amiable Lipscomb," writes Miss Sally, an hour or two later, "had his hand on the latch of the door, intending to make his escape; Stoddert, considering his indisposition, acquainted him with the deceit. The females ran down-stairs to join in the general laugh. I walked into Jesse's [Jesse Foulke's] parlor. There sat poor Stoddert (whose sore lips must have received no advantage from this), almost convulsed with laughing, rolling in an armchair."

Poor Miss Sally Wister! She took such a profound interest in the Major that she was even solicitous for his sore lips.

"He said nothing; I believe he could not have spoke. 'Major Stoddert,' said I, 'go to call Tilly back. He will lose himself,—indeed he will'—every word interrupted with a 'Ha! ha!' At last he rose, and went to the door; and what a loud voice could avail in bringing him back he tried. Figure to thyself this Tilly, of a snowy evening, no hat, shoes down at the heel, hair unty'd, flying across meadows, creeks and mud-holes. Flying from what? Why, a bit of painted wood! But he was ignorant of what it was. The idea of being made a prisoner wholly engrossed his mind, and his last resource was to run. After a while, we being in more com-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

posure, and our bursts of laughter less frequent, yet by no means subsided—in full assembly of girls and officers, —Tilly entered. The greatest part of my risibility turned to pity. Inexpressible confusion had taken entire possession of his countenance, his fine hair hanging disheveled down his shoulders, all splashed with mud; yet his bright confusion and race had not divested him of his beauty. He smiled as he tripped up the steps; but 'twas vexation placed it on his features. Joy at that moment was banished from his heart. He briskly walked five or six steps, then stopped, and took a general survey of us all. 'Where *have* you been, Mr. Tilly?' asked one officer. We girls were silent. 'I really imagined,' said Major Stoddert, 'that you were gone for your pistols. I followed you to prevent danger,'—an excessive laugh at each question, which it was impossible to restrain. 'Pray, where were your pistols, Tilly?' He broke his silence by the following expression: 'You may all go to —— ———.' I never heard him utter an indecent expression before.

"At last his good nature gained a complete ascendance over his anger, and he joined heartily in the laugh. I will do him the justice to say that he bore it charmingly. No cowardly threats, no vengeance pronounced. Stoddert caught hold of his coat. 'Come, look at what you ran away from,' and dragged him to the door. He gave it a look, said it was very natural, and by the singularity of his expression gave fresh cause for diversion. We

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

all retired to our different parlors, for the rest of our faces, if I may say so."

The next day Miss Sally has quite forgotten the episode of Tilly and the wooden grenadier. "Oh, Deborah," she writes plaintively, "the Major is going to leave us entirely—just going. I will see him first." There is pathos in that second sentence—"I will see him first." Who knows what tender words were uttered in that last interview? A few hours later she says: "He has gone. I saw him pass the bridge. The woods which thee enters immediately after crossing it hindered us from following him further. I seem to fancy he will return in the evening." At night she jots down in her diary, perhaps to the accompaniment of tears, the following: "Stoddert not come back. We shall not, I fancy, see him again for months, perhaps for years, unless he should visit Philadelphia."

And thus the entertaining major vanishes from the life of Sally Wister, never to return. We hear of him, in after years, as a statesman of reputation, but we never hear of him, as we should like to, as the betrothed of this charming Philadelphia maiden. It is hard to determine how serious was this love-affair which unfolded its quaint story amid the booming of cannon and the clink of swords. Possibly the Major was a sad flirt, and never spoke the word which Miss Sally half expected to hear trembling on his lips. Let the girl keep her secret. Of one thing, at least, we are assured. Until the day when

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

she dies, a staid old maid, Miss Sally will have a soft spot in her heart for this departed hero.

A week after Stoddert's leave-taking the girl chronicles that the other officers have gone away to their several duties. "I feel sorry at this departure," she adds significantly, "yet 'tis a different kind from what I felt some time since." That tells the story better than a thousand pages of lamentation. There is truth in simplicity.

Yet Miss Sally is too young to go into a decline, or to think of "silent tombs," because her *beau sabreur* has taken himself off. She still can write attractively of her experiences in Montgomery County, and is by no means blind to the attentions of a handsome man. When she moves away from the Foulke mansion to join her family at a farm in the North Wales district, several miles away, she is thrilled by the appearance on the scene of a distinguished Virginian. It is now June of 1778. An elegant officer rides up to the farm, and proceeds to quarter five and twenty men in one of the adjacent fields. Miss Sally is thrown into a state of pleasurable excitement. "What is the name of this man?" she demands of her cousin, "Prissa" Foulke.

"Dyer, I believe," replies the cousin.

"Captain Dyer! Oh, the name! What does he say?"

"Why, that he will kiss me when he has dined!"

"Singular, on so short an acquaintance," roguishly observes Miss Sally.

"He came and fixed his arm on the chair I sat in," re-

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

sumes Miss Prissa. " 'Pray ma'am,' he asked, 'is there not a family from town with you?' 'Yes.' 'What's their name?' 'Wister.' 'There are two fine girls there. I will go chat with them. Pray, did they leave their effects in Philadelphia?' 'Yes, everything almost.' 'They shall have them again, that they shall.'

"Oh, Sally," cries Miss Prissa, as she mimics the officer's manner, "he's a Virginian; that's greatly in his favor! I'm not sure Dyer's his name, but I understood so."

By nightfall Miss Sally has met the mysterious "Dyer," and feels, forsooth, as if she had been through the most sensational of adventures. For she writes thus to Deborah Norris:

"Take a circumstantial account of this afternoon and the person of this extraordinary man. His exterior first. His name is not Dyer, but Alexander Spotswood Dandridge, which certainly gives a genteel idea of the man. I will be particular. His person is more elegantly formed than any I ever saw; tall, and commanding. [Perhaps Miss Sally makes a mental reservation in favor of a certain absent major as she writes this.] His forehead is very white, though the lower part of his face is much sunburned; his features are extremely pleasing; an even, white set of teeth, dark hair and eyes. I can't better describe him than by saying he's the handsomest man I ever beheld. Betsey and Liddy coincide in this opinion.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“ After I had sat a while at home in came Dandridge. [You are a trifle sly, Miss Sally! Confess that you were waiting for him.] He entered into chat immediately. Asked if we knew Tacy Vanderen? Said he courted her, and that they were to be married soon. Observed my sampler, which was in full view. Wished I would teach the Virginians some of my needle wisdom; they were the laziest girls in the world. Told his name. Laughed and talked incessantly. At last ‘May I’ (to mamma) ‘introduce my brother officer?’ We assented; so he called him. ‘Mr. Watts, Mrs. Wister, young Miss Wister. Mr. Watts, ladies, is one of our Virginia children.’ He sat down. Tea was ordered. Dandridge never drank tea; Watts had done, so we sat to the table alone. ‘Let’s walk in the garden,’ said the Captain [Dandridge]; so we called Liddy and went (*not* Watts). We sat down in a sort of summer-house. ‘Miss Sally, are you a Quaker?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Now, *are* you a Quaker?’ ‘Yes, I am.’ ‘Then you are a Tory?’ ‘I am not, indeed.’ Had we been acquainted seven years, we could not have been more sociable.”

Miss Sally has not forgotten the Major, and, evidently, is not in love with Captain Dandridge, but she likes to amuse herself, and the man in the pale moon looks down upon them good-humoredly, with a smile on that twisted face of his. As they sit together gazing at nature the Captain (who, by the way, is a relation of General Washington’s wife, who was born a Dandridge) tells the girl

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

that he must be off the next morning before sunrise. Miss Sally is duly impressed by the announcement, and thinks how hard must be the life of a soldier. But behold what she wrote down in the famous diary the next day:

“I was awakened this morning with a great racket of the Captain’s servant calling him, but the lazy fellow never rose till about half an hour past eight. This his daylight ride! I imagined they would be gone before now, so I dressed in a green skirt and dark short gown. Provoking. So down I came, this Captain (wild wretch) standing at the back door. He bowed and called me. I only looked, and went to breakfast. About nine I took my work and seated myself in the parlor. Not long had I sat when in came Dandridge—the handsomest man in existence, at least that I had ever seen. But stop here, while I just say, the night before, chatting upon dress, he said he had no patience with those officers who, every morn before they went on detachments, would wait to be dressed and powdered. ‘I am,’ said I, ‘excessively fond of powder and think it very becoming.’ ‘Are you?’ he reply’d. ‘I am very careless, as often wearing my cap thus’ (turning the back part before) ‘as any way.’ I left off where he came in. He was powdered very white, a (pretty colored) brown coat, lapelled with green, and white waistcoat, etc., and his

“‘Sword beside him negligently hung.’

He made a truly elegant figure. ‘Good-morning, Miss

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Sally. You are very well, I hope?' 'Very well. Pray sit down,' which he did close by me. 'Oh, dear,' said I, 'I see thee is powdered.' 'Yes, ma'am. I have dressed myself off for you.' Will I be excused, Debby, if I look upon his being powdered in the light of a compliment to me? 'Yes, Sally, as thee is a country maid, and don't often meet with compliments.' Saucy Debby Norris!"

The dashing Dandridge rides away, but his duty, whatever it may have been, does not seem to fatigue or distress him, for he is back again before noon. "Oh, Miss Sally," he cries merrily, catching the girl's hands, "I have a beautiful sweetheart for you!"

"Pooh! ridiculous!" simpers Miss Sally, with a pretty pretense of indignation. "Loose my hands!"

"Well, but don't be so cross!"

"Who *is* he?" asks Miss Sally, with true feminine curiosity.

"Major Clough."

"I have seen him."

"Is he not pretty?"

"To be sure!"

"I am going to headquarters. Have you any commands there?"

"Yes, I have," replies the young lady, very severely. "Pray, who is thy commanding officer?"

"Colonel Bland, ma'am," returns the Captain, in no wise frightened.

"Please give my compliments to him," orders Miss



## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

Sally, "and say I should be glad if he would send thee back with a little more manners."

Thereupon Dandridge becomes, we are told, "intolerably saucy," and vows that Miss Sally has "a little spiteful heart." Then she protests, amid much laughter, that the Captain is a wicked fellow.

"Sally," he asks, "if Tacy Vanderen won't have me, will you?"

"No, really, none of her discarded lovers!"

"But, provided I prefer you to her, will you consent?"

"No, I won't," pouts the Quakeress.

"Very well, madame."

"And, after saying he would return to-morrow, among a hundred other things," the diary continues, "he elegantly walked out of the room. Soon he came back, took up a volume of Homer's Iliad, and read aloud to us. He reads very well, and with judgment. One remark he made, that I will relate, on these lines:—

"While Greece a heavy, thick retreat maintains,  
Wedg'd in one body, like a flight of cranes,'

"— knows our army won't do so. I wish they did.' He laughed, and went away."

The following day saw the last of the captivating Dandridge. Perhaps he would have been quite willing to throw over the absent Miss Tacy Vanderen, had Miss Wister given him the needed encouragement. The young chronicler thus tells of his departure:

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“Major Clough, Captain Swan, and Mr. Moore, a lieutenant of horse, dined with Dandridge. The latter, after dinner, came in to bid us adieu. He sat down, and was rather saucy. I looked very grave. ‘Miss Betsey, you have a very ill-natured sister. Observe how cross she looks.’ He prayed we might part friends, and offered his hand. I gave him mine, which he kissed in a very gallant manner; and so, with truly affectionate leave, he walked to the parlor door. ‘God bless you, ladies,’ he said, bowed, went into the road, mounted a very fine horse, and rode away; leaving Watts and the troop here to take care of us, as he said. ‘Mr. Watts, Miss Sally, is a very worthy man; but, poor soul, he is so captivated with you,—the pain in his breast all owing to you——’ But he is gone, and I think, as I have escaped thus far safe, I am quite a heroine, and need not be fearful of any of the lords of creation for the future.”

This is the last of Dandridge. Miss Sally, though there is still an ache in her heart on account of Major Stoddert, has been charmed by the Captain’s flattery. She thus sums up his character, which, she says, it would take the genius of a Hogarth to describe properly. “He is possessed of a good understanding, a very liberal education, gay and volatile to excess. He is an Indian, a gentleman, grave and gay, in the same hour. But what signifies? I can’t give thee a true idea of him; but he assumes at pleasure a behavior the most courtly, the most elegant of anything I ever saw. He is very enter-

## WAR AND FLIRTATION

---

taining company, and very vain of his personal beauties; yet nevertheless his character is exceptional."

Let us give the closing paragraphs of the diary, and we have done:

*"Sixth Day, Morn, June 19th, [1778].*

"We have heard an astonishing piece of news! The English have entirely left the city! [Philadelphia.] It is almost impossible! Stay, I shall hear further.

*"Sixth Day, Eve.*

"A light horseman has just confirmed the above intelligence! This is *charmante!* They decamped yesterday. He (the horseman) was in Philadelphia. It is true. They have gone. Past a doubt. I can't help exclaiming to the girls,—'Now are you *sure* the news is true? Now are you *sure* they have gone?' 'Yes, yes, yes!' they all cry, 'and may they never, never return.' Dr. Gould came here to-night. Our army are about six miles off, on their march to the Jerseys.

*"Seventh Day, Morn.*

"O. F. [Owen Foulke] arrived just now, and related as followeth:—The army began their march at six this morning by their house. . . . Our brave, our heroic GENERAL WASHINGTON was escorted by fifty of the Life Guard, with drawn swords. Each day he acquires an addition to his goodness. We have been very anxious to know how the inhabitants of Philadelphia have fared. I understand that General Arnold, who bears a good char-

















#### IV

### A B E L L E O F D E L A W A R E

OLD-FASHIONED novelists and old-fashioned readers of a certain type were wont to revel in a heroine who had an unfortunate love affair, and then died gracefully in the last chapter. Such an exit from the mimic world was tearfully regarded as the *Ultima Thule* of satisfying romance. Yet there is far more pathos in the story of a heroine who, instead of expiring at the right moment, and in a dramatic manner, outlives her beauty, fame and fortune and struggles for many a month with poverty, and worse still, relentless wrinkles. It is exactly the difference between the dazzling electric light suddenly extinguished and the dainty wax candle which burns down to the socket and then feebly flickers and goes out. Of the wax-candle order of romance is the story of Mary Vining, of Delaware, that Revolutionary belle who quickened the heart beats of many an American officer and brought to her pretty feet, even in her middle age, that doughty widower and gallant soldier, "Mad" Anthony Wayne. There was nothing theatrical in the career of this eighteenth-century lady, no hairbreadth escapes, no elopements, yet her life, with its conquests, its triumphs and disappointment, pleasantly suggests a tale of powdered hair and shoe-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

buckles, of ceremonious flirtations between the movements of the minuet, and of those stirring days when King George III sent his regiments over to America with the worthy object of either shooting or hanging all our forefathers.

Mary Vining, born near Dover in 1756, and the daughter of Judge John Vining, had for her heritage beauty, fortune and social position. And those three gifts were as much prized in colonial Delaware a century and a half ago as they are to-day in conservative, dignified Philadelphia or cosmopolitan New York. There was much virtue, then as now, in dark, sparkling eyes, piquant features, a comfortable account at the banker's, and a family tree of respectable proportions. Thus Mistress Molly became an important personage from the year of her birth. As the seasons passed quickly onward, the people of Dover began to predict that she would soon blossom into a belle who would not long remain in a state of single blessedness. Meanwhile the young lady herself was receiving what was then considered a finished feminine education, albeit hardly a curriculum up to the sterner standards of Vassar and Bryn Mawr. She took prodigiously to the French language, and, possibly, might be caught sitting up late at night endangering her pretty black eyes by reading some forbidden novel, or a "modish" play. So far as novel-reading by stealth is concerned, it is agreed that human nature never changes. Girls of fifteen still have a liking

## A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

for some interdicted romance, although they no longer weep over the woes of an *Amelia* or a *Clarissa Harlowe*.

At the age of fourteen Mary Vining lost her father, and we find her writing a quaint, woe-begone letter to one of her cousins. "How vain," she says, "is it to place our affection upon anything in this world. One moment, perhaps, happy in the best of parents; the next, a poor, destitute orphan. Orphan! Let me recall that word. I have yet one of the best of parents, and one who is deserving of all my love and duty." She breaks off for a second to give directions about some "very good green tea" to be used "while Mr. Chew is down," and concludes with the "sincerest prayer to yon Heaven" for her cousin's happiness—"if there is such a thing on earth."<sup>1</sup>

The sentiment of the letter is so old-fashioned, so characteristic of the period, that one can almost see the child as she bedews the paper with her tears, then slowly blots it with the inevitable sand, and wonders—if Mr. Chew will like the green tea.

Mary Vining dries her dark eyes, as any other healthy, buoyant girl would, and begins to wonder, as do many of her elders, what will come of the fast-increasing quarrel between Great Britain and her stiff-necked colonies. She is growing prettier all the time; admirers are already

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* an article on Miss Vining by Mrs. Henry G. Banning, in the *American Historical Register*, July, 1895. Mr. George Hazlehurst has likewise written gracefully of our heroine.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

in evidence; when they are not discussing the "detestable tyranny" of his Majesty, King George, they are lauding the regularity of the young lady's nose, or the charm of her smile. Next the Revolution, which has been smouldering for so long, breaks out into fierce blaze; the battle of Bunker Hill is fought, and bravely, too; events follow quick and fast. At last the delegates to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia risk their lives and fortunes by adopting the Declaration of Independence. "Let us hang together," slyly observes Benjamin Franklin, as they consider the document, "or else assuredly we will hang separately."

One of these delegates, who enters importantly into the life of Miss Vining, is Cæsar Rodney, of Delaware. Many of us have heard the story of how Rodney, when hastily summoned to Philadelphia to cast his vote for the Declaration, rode like mad to that city, partly in a driving rain-storm, all the way from his country place near Dover. Some of us have read Brooks's poem, wherein that ride will no doubt be followed with interest by many future generations:

"In that soft mid-land where the breezes bear  
The North and South on the genial air,  
Through the county of Kent, on affairs of state,  
Rode Cæsar Rodney, the delegate.

"Burly and big, and bold and bluff,  
In his three-cornered hat and coat of snuff,  
A foe to King George and the English state  
Was Cæsar Rodney, the delegate.

# A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

“ Into Dover village he rode apace,  
And his kinsfolk knew, from his anxious face,  
It was matter grave that brought him there,  
To the counties three on the Delaware.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Comes a rider swift on a panting bay ;  
‘ Ho, Rodney, ho ! You must save the day,  
For the Congress halts at a deed so great,  
And your vote alone may decide its fate.’

“ Answered Rodney, then : ‘ I will ride with speed ;  
It is Liberty’s stress ; it is Freedom’s need.  
When stands it ? ’ ‘ To-night ! Not a moment to spare,  
But ride like the wind from the Delaware ! ’

“ ‘ Ho, saddle the black ! I’ve but half a day,  
And the Congress sits eighty miles away —  
But I’ll be in time, if God grants me grace,  
To shake my fist in King George’s face.’

“ He is up, he is off, and the black horse flies  
On the northward road ere the ‘ God-speed ’ dies ;  
It is gallop and spur as the leagues they clear,  
And the clustering mile-stones move a-rear.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ It is seven ; the horse-boat, broad of beam,  
At the Schuylkill ferry crawls over the stream —  
And at seven-fifteen by the Rittenhouse clock,  
He flings his rein to the tavern jock.

“ The Congress is met ; the debate’s begun,  
And Liberty lags for the vote of one —  
When into the hall, not a moment late,  
Walks Cæsar Rodney, the delegate.

“ Not a moment late ! and that half-day’s ride  
Forwards the world with a mighty stride ;  
For the act was passed : ere the midnight stroke  
O’er the Quaker City its echoes woke.”

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

It is pleasant to note, in this iconoclastic age, that the old Rodney house, from which the delegate began his famous ride, is still to be seen, several miles back of Dover. It stands near the fine mansion once owned by John Dickinson.

Cæsar Rodney, as we find him at this critical time in our history, is a genial bachelor with vast patriotism and a pleasant wit. He has had, so goes the gossip, an unhappy love affair with another Mary Vining, an aunt of our heroine. The elder lady has given him the proverbial mitten and married a clergyman. She survives this marriage but a few months, and Cæsar Rodney is left to mourn her unto his life's end, as he will, and to die, as he has lived, without a wife. "Molly, I love you from my soul," he once wrote to her, before the clergyman had appeared on the scene. He doubtless cherished this fond sentiment long after his rival was left a widower.

The Mary Vining of our sketch was a cousin of Rodney's, and he saw in her grace and beauty much to remind him of the dead aunt. Thus, when the statesman was elected governor of Delaware during the darkest days of the war, he was glad to have his house in Wilmington presided over by the fascinating niece. Into this house (later known as No. 606 Market Street) came the Marquis de Lafayette, who ever cherished for her a sort of fervent but respectful admiration. He was a married man, was the Marquis, and his attention was decorous. Many another French officer there found, in the charm and the



## A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

conversational abilities of the young Delawarian, qualities which he had not dreamed could exist in any woman outside of the court of Queen Marie Antoinette. More than one of the visitors laid his fortune—if he had any—and his fluttering heart at the feet of Miss Vining; but she laughed them off with a good-nature that took away half the sting from the refusals. We can see her as she replies gayly, when asked why she is so obdurate: “Admiration of the world is spoiling me. I fear I could not content myself with the admiration of one.” We can hear her, too, when she comes radiantly into Cæsar Rodney’s dining-room as some officers, through with their Madeira, have crowded to the eastern window to watch the placid waters of Christiana Creek.

“Gentlemen,” she cries, first in French and then in English, “that lovely stream moving languidly amid its green banks always reminds me of a beautiful coquette, now coming here, now turning there, in playful waywardness.” She turns her head, gives a pretty swirl to her fan, and smiles roguishly. The gentlemen are enchanted. No need to ask them who is the real coquette; it is *not* the innocent Christiana. Again, she enters the drawing-room where one of her cousins, a little boy, is studying Latin by the open fire. She is dressed for a ball, and as she goes up to a mirror, and looks approvingly at her reflection, the young student casts upon her a glance of involuntary admiration. “Come here, you little rogue,” she commands imperiously, “and you shall kiss my

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

hand." But the boy, overcome by a sudden bashfulness, draws back. "You should be glad to do it," laughs the girl, and she quotes a line from *Antony and Cleopatra* :

"A hand that kings have lipped."

The boy, in his confusion, says nothing. In after years he regrets his want of gallantry, and recalls Mary Vining as she stood before him as a "beautiful picture." Had she lived in England, in the days of the *Spectator*, Addison or Dick Steele would surely have enshrined her in some immortal essay.

It was in the cellar of Rodney's house that Lafayette stored some of the precious gold coin which he had brought from France. Rodney's cousin was a woman, but she never told the secret. When the Marquis returned home to France he was not slow to speak of the attractions of Miss Vining, and it is related that Marie Antoinette, hearing of the American's beauty, sent her word that there would always be a warm welcome for her at the court of the Tuilleries, either as a visitor or as a maid of honor.

But Mary Vining did more than turn the heads of the French, the allies of her countrymen. She even won the heart—who shall dare say intentionally?—of a British officer who risked court-martial, dishonor, everything, to get one look at her, many weeks after she had refused him. It was in the spring of 1778, just before the army of the invaders was to evacuate Philadelphia. The

## A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

officer, who held a command therein, determined to see Miss Vining once again. Perhaps, as he fondly thought, she would not always hold out against him. So he smuggled himself through the lines one afternoon, mounted a horse, and rode off to Wilmington at breakneck speed straight into the enemy's country. It was a desperate thing to do. Discovery of his absence by the British meant disgrace; discovery by the Americans along his route meant arrest, and possibly execution as a spy; but young blood is not to be restrained by such thoughts. So the officer sped on to Wilmington, in some effective disguise, and reached the home of Cæsar Rodney, one of his own country's bitterest foes, late in the evening. Who shall say what dangers he encountered before he stood before Mary Vining? One's imagination can picture a scene worthy of a Revolutionary novel. All we know is that the impetuous Briton got only a stern refusal for his pains. After escaping from Wilmington, perhaps through the good-natured connivance of the obstinate girl, he succeeded in getting back to Philadelphia. Miss Vining never heard of any trouble coming to him through this escapade, so it may be inferred that his rashness met with no punishment. Let us hope that he survived the war, to reach England in safety.

The years glided on, as the Revolution triumphed and the sturdy colonies, released from British aggression, emerged proudly into the arena of the nations. Wash-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

ington was now President of the United States of America. In the meantime Miss Vining retained her beauty and no small part of her youthful bloom, and, although she was getting dangerously near the middle-aged period of forty, appeared to be as charming as ever. So, at least, thought General Anthony Wayne, now a widower, for he fell desperately in love with Mary Vining, in his impetuous way, and was as successful with her, in following the tender passion, as he had been in the more warlike pursuit of charging an enemy. It is even hinted that before his first marriage he had sighed, as only an eighteenth-century lover could sigh, for the Wilmington belle, but that he had not then made any impression on her adamant heart. Be that as it may, his middle-aged love-making was more fortunate, and Miss Vining, who had refused many a French cavalier, said "yes" to this daring American democrat.

"Can it be true," asked Mrs. Cadwalader, widow of the Philadelphia General, "that Miss Vining is engaged to General Wayne? Can one so refined marry this coarse soldier? True, he is brave, wonderfully brave, and 'none but the brave deserve the fair.'"

Yet Wayne was something more than a "coarse soldier." Nor was he the "Mad" Anthony which some chroniclers would have us believe. True, he had not the manners of a courtier, but he had a stout heart and a rough-diamond character which make him stand out as one of the most picturesque figures in the annals of the

## A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

olden time. It was to Miss Vining that the General cried, as he jumped excitedly from his chair, after hearing her speak of the crime of a traitor: "Madame, had I been present I would have *suicided* him!" And we all know the anecdote, which deserves to be true, even if it is not, of how Wayne said to Washington: "I am not only willing to storm Stony Point, General, but I'll storm—— if you will only plan it." Washington is reported to have answered, with just the suspicion of a twinkle in his blue-gray eyes: "Hadn't we better try Stony Point first?"

There is still in existence a rare old set of India china which was to have been the wedding gift of General Wayne to his intended bride, but he was not destined to see it in use. For "Mad" Anthony died at Presque Isle, on Lake Erie, in the middle of December, 1796, of the unromantic complaint of gout of the stomach. Mary Vining put on mourning and gave up her old gay life, and all the flattery which had been given her as an offering of incense. Thus ended her last romance. A middle-aged romance, says the cynic. Yes, but who of us with the crow's-feet and whitening hair shall dare to say that there is any age-limit to affairs of the heart?

Had Miss Vining consulted the dramatic proprieties, as observed by the old-fashioned novelists before alluded to, she would have died then and there, in good orthodox fashion. But she went on living for another quarter of a century, as old friends passed from the world, beauty

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

fell away, and poverty came to her. Herein was the real tragedy of her life. Look at a woman once rich, courted, beautiful; now sadly aged, with few friends left, and in such sore financial straits that she is obliged to turn boarding-house keeper. Where is the romance in serving tea to strangers, or showing Abigail or Dorcas how to make the beds?

Yet Mistress Vining was a gentlewoman to the end, and there always remained about her a reflection of her past glory. Lafayette corresponded with her until her death, while no distinguished foreigner ever passed through Delaware without leaving a card at this lady's house—boarders or no boarders. We get more than one pathetic glimpse of the declining days of Miss Vining. They show us that something of her old spirit (or shall we call it pardonable feminine vanity?) still clung to her, like a phantom of the realities of the long-ago. Her fine brown hair never whitened, nor did the dark eyes lose their youthful sparkle, but Father Time ungallantly put his impress on her face, and the once willowy form began to bend. So the poor lady was fain to receive her friends in a darkened room, to put her handkerchief before her mouth, hiding the now decrepit teeth over which the beaux had once raved, and to muffle her features in a great veil when she appeared upon the street. It is only the "new woman" who can stand the loss of beauty with equanimity—and the "new woman" seldom has any to lose.

## A BELLE OF DELAWARE

---

It was rarely, indeed, that the recluse left her home in Wilmington and those prosaic boarders. One evening the congregation of Old Swedes' Church was startled to see her moving up the aisle, leaning gracefully on the arm of a servant. There were many whispers and nudges from the assembled worshipers. "There goes Miss Vining," was the excited, half stifled comment which passed among them like a ripple. She sat down in a front pew, with the air of a dethroned queen, and listened to the service. No one could see her face. Only the back of her mourning gown and a great black poke bonnet were visible. "We shall get a look at her when she comes down the aisle," thought the congregation, between the prayers. But Miss Vining had no intention that people should say of her: "Poor thing! How faded!" The service ended; the worshipers craned their necks, as she came down the aisle with the servant, in order to catch one glimpse of the once distinguished beauty. But they were disappointed, for her face was almost completely hidden by a cap with a wonderfully wide ruffle. "A flash from dark eyes, and a view, in deep shadow, of the tip of her nose and chin," were the only things apparent. She walked quickly home to her house on Kennet Pike, where is now the corner of Tenth and Market Streets.

So the world moved on prosaically for Mary Vining until a day in the early spring of 1821, when she was laid to rest in Old Swedes' churchyard. Six girls acted

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

as pallbearers, as if to show that May could pay one final tribute to December. Not one of them had ever looked upon her face. As the more elderly mourners left the burying-ground, after hearing the solemn "dust to dust" of the clergyman, they gossiped softly of the days when the dead woman had seemed all life, and youth, and hope. Before the service the six pallbearers had giggled among themselves. They saw not the tragedy of the life just closed. They did not understand, naturally enough, how old age, and wrinkles, and disappointments, could be realities. To them the service meant only another old lady being buried in the churchyard; nothing more.







A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE







## V

A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

IT was in the year 1760 when Thomas Jefferson, a stripling of seventeen, "tall, raw-boned, freckled and sandy-haired," as Parton described him, came from western Virginia to enter the College of William and Mary, at Williamsburg. In spite of his large feet and hands, thick wrists and prominent cheek-bones, he was a bright, attractive youth, "as straight as a gun-barrel sinewy and strong, with that alertness of movement which comes of easy familiarity with saddle, gun, canoe, minuet, and contra-dance,—that sure, elastic tread, and ease of bearing, which we still observe in country-bred lads who have been exempt from the ruder toils of agriculture, while enjoying in full measure the freedom and the sports of the country." His teeth were faultless, and his hazel-gray eyes indicated a gentle character and a sympathetic yet keenly analytic mind.

"Tom" Jefferson, through the death of his father, had already become the head of his family, and the virtual owner of the "Shadwell Farm," in the mountains a hundred and fifty miles to the northwest of quaint Williamsburg. He was of that sturdy, honest yeoman stock which has given so many fine specimens of man-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

hood to the cause of American patriotism, and there was a deal of shrewd, energetic Welsh blood coursing through his veins. The young student at William and Mary had, in fact, no pretensions to aristocracy, unless it might be from his good mother's side of the house. She was the daughter of Isham Randolph, an old-time Virginia lord of the manor, who owned an immense tobacco plantation on the River James, and who thought, no doubt, that when he allowed his seventeen-year-old daughter to marry Peter Jefferson, an humble land-surveyor, he was acting with a fine show of condescension. Old Randolph lived in true manorial style in his colonial mansion, keeping a hundred servants or more, so that his daughter, Mistress Jefferson, never forgot the wealth and the breeding of her father. Perhaps that is why her son Thomas, play he the democrat as he did in after life, could never quite convince people that his studied carelessness of dress and an affectation of equally careless manners were altogether sincere. Man never forgets his genealogy.

At the time that young Jefferson reached Williamsburg the town was nothing more than a straggling village of one long street, with the Capitol of Virginia at one end, the College at the other, and a ten-acre square, on which were erected certain public buildings, in the middle. It was not a very impressive town, according to our modern ideas; yet it was considered in the old days, when our ancestors paid their allegiance to King George



## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

III, as a very gay resort. With its one thousand inhabitants, many of whom were persons of quality, it was said to be the "centre of taste, fashion and refinement." In the winter, when the Virginia Assembly was in session there, Williamsburg was crowded with the gentry of the colony, and frequent were the balls and routs at which well-dressed cavaliers and richly habited ladies (whose costumes had been imported from London) joined in the country dance or the more stately minuet. On a clear day the one street echoed with the sound of wheels and the cracking of whips, as the families of the planters dashed past in handsome coaches (likewise imported from London), drawn by four or six stout horses. The Capitol itself was a "light and airy structure" as young Master Jefferson thought it; the "palace" of the Governor of the Colony was large, comfortable, and irretrievably ugly, and the College buildings presented a plain but respectable appearance. If we add to these public institutions a number of private houses, built of wood and shingles, and the necessary accompaniment of negro hovels, we have the fair Virginian capital for the sight of which so many maidens of the Old Dominion sighed. For to the provincial lass who chanced to live South of Maryland, Williamsburg was the same sort of social Paradise that New York or Paris now seems to the girl who inhabits some prairie city far west of the Alleghany Mountains.

William and Mary College was then anything but an

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

ideal fountain of learning. Its curriculum was poor, and some of the professors led lives that would appear to us utterly inconsistent with their intellectual work. They were, for the most part, gentlemen of sporting proclivity, who liked their dogs, their horses, and their wine far better than they did their avowed mission of teaching. If the master of Shadwell managed to receive learning from this *Alma Mater*, despite the influence of so many dissolute teachers, it was because of the presence in the faculty of a certain Scotchman, the professor of mathematics, who took a great fancy to Thomas and incited him to study as few other students of the College troubled themselves to do. And so the youth worked hard, drinking in all sorts of education, from mathematics, which he called "the passion of his life," to the irreligious dissertations of the French philosophers, Voltaire and the rest, whose views were fast becoming fashionable in the English-speaking world. He read law, too, and cast many a glance at "Coke on Littleton," as he fondly dreamed of a great future for himself as a distinguished colonial jurist. No thought yet of a Declaration of Independence.

But as we look at this lank, freckle-faced youth, who pores over his figures and old Littleton, do we merely see in him the interested student, with no more heart than that possessed by a bookworm? Not a bit of it! The heart that beats under Master Tom's waistcoat is going at a furious rate of speed whenever he thinks—not of

## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

Littleton, but of a certain lovely young lady! For the hero who will live to write the immortal Declaration of Independence, and view life and humanity with a philosophical serenity is as hopelessly in love as ever was any cavalier of old. It is the first time, too, that the malady has afflicted him. It goes all the harder with him in consequence.

And who is the young lady? Why, Miss Rebecca Burwell, a strikingly beautiful Virginian of good family and fair expectations. But young Jefferson cares nothing for her expectations. He only knows that he loves her as man never loved woman before—of course—and that she has the sweetest face he has ever gazed upon. Then what exquisite grace! How charmingly does she tread the minuet in the dancing room of the Raleigh Tavern. Some of the Williamsburgers, base cynics that they are, whisper that Miss Burwell's attractions are all in her face and figure; that she is not mentally brilliant; that she has not one thousandth part of the brain of Master Tom. But what cares the latter for all that? When a lover is filled with visions of his first love he thinks of the glance of her eye, the brightness of her smile, the curve of her mouth—of anything, in fine, save the powers of her mind. There is never any consideration of intellectuality in our youthful experience with love. Young Cupid does not go about searching for blue-stockings. The bachelor of fifty may do that if he so desires, but the lad of seventeen—never.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

We are not surprised that the time passes so pleasantly for the student. No wonder that he ends by thinking Williamsburg a bewitching spot. The longer he stays there the more he can see of Rebecca. But at last (he wonders how he can live afterwards) he must end his college days at William and Mary, and return to his home. It is the Christmas season of 1762, when, with a sad heart, he departs from Williamsburg. When will he see Rebecca again? Does she love him? Dare he ask her? These are some of the questions that torment him with a sort of pleasant bitterness as he travels homeward. The landscape is bleak enough, but he feels bleaker himself than all the snow-covered hills of Virginia. He does his best, when visiting at the house of a friend on his way to Shadwell, to cultivate a Christmas joy, and to be a truly gay participant in the festivities of the season. He tries to laugh and talk and plays his violin while the young women dance some new minuet-figures. Alas, the sweet creatures only remind him of the absent Mistress Burwell and he can but sigh when he should be merry. He is so dreary that he cannot even read the once admired "Coke on Littleton." He actually writes to John Page, a college friend, that Coke should be consigned to the tender mercies of His Most Satanic Majesty. Surely the lover, "sighing like furnace," can have no affinity with the dry crotchets of prosaic law.

As if to increase his gloom at this season of cheer, a "watch-paper," which Rebecca has cut and painted for

## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

him, is ruined by the rain. While he sleeps at night, dreaming, we may venture to fancy, of the absent one, the rain comes in through window or crevice, and when he awakes in the morning he finds his timepiece swimming in a pool of water. As he writes pathetically to John Page: "The subtle particles of the water with which the case was filled, had, by their penetration, so overcome the cohesion of the particles of the paper of which my dear picture and watch-paper were composed, that, in attempting to take them out to dry them—good God! *Mens horret referre!*—my fingers gave them such a rent as I fear *I* never shall get over." Had there been an earthquake, in which half the world had crumbled away, Thomas Jefferson could not have been more horrified. What is the destruction of half the universe to the destruction of a watch-paper suggesting the lovely face of Rebecca Burwell? He continues: "And now, although the picture may be defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind, that I shall think of her too often, I fear, for my peace of mind, and too often, I am sure, to get through old Coke this winter." *Old Coke*, forsooth.

Is Thomas Jefferson, future statesman and President of the United States, actually love-sick? Yes; there is no denying the truth when the loss of a watch-paper will cause a young fellow such exquisite agony. Has there never been a time, gentle reader, when you were ill in the same way?

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Soon after Christmas Jefferson is home again. Once that the pleasure of greeting relatives is over he begins to get very much bored. It cannot be otherwise when he thinks of Rebecca—his “Belinda” as he classically calls her—and rails at an unkind Fate which keeps him so far away from Williamsburg. A lover may nurse a hopeless passion and derive some satisfaction from it if he is able continually to gaze upon the adored one. But when many a mile separates him from her, and he knows not who may be whispering sweet nothings in the girl's ear, and trying to win her away—oh, that is hard to bear. So, at least, it seems to this young man. “Belinda!” “Belinda!” That is his one thought. It is no wonder, therefore, that life on the farm, or the reading of Coke, seems empty mockery. “All things here,” he writes wearily to John Page, “appear to me to trudge on in one and the same round: we rise in the morning that we may eat breakfast, dinner, and supper, and go to bed again that we may get up the next morning and do the same; so that you never saw two peas more alike than our yesterday and to-day.”

As the stupid days roll on, how desperate does his future seem to be, at least to himself. While he is pretending to study law in this wilderness some gay buck far away in Williamsburg may be asking for the hand of “Belinda,” and, perhaps, receiving it. What a horrible thought! Poor Thomas! “A jury of lovers would have pronounced his situation serious in the extreme. He was

## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

enamored of a beauty and an heiress: she in the full lustre of her charms; he a youth not twenty, of small estate heavily burdened, reading the elementary book of a profession requiring years of preparation. . . . Would she wait? Could he ask her to wait? She must love him very much to do that and he did not know that she loved him at all."

The more the lover thought things over the more confused he became. Sometimes he determined to go as fast as a horse could take him straight to Williamsburg, there to ask Miss Burwell two pointed questions: "Do you love me?" "Will you wait for me?" Then he would say to himself: "But if she were to reject me? Then I should be ten times more wretched than ever!" Sometimes he would suggest to John Page the propriety of their making a tour of Europe, so that he might learn to forget the provoking "Belinda." Page, too, happened to be in love with another charmer, and Jefferson thought the trip might do him good likewise. But in the end there was no journey to foreign lands. For weeks the distraught swain remains on the Shadwell estate, torn with contending emotions, as he alternately studies "Coke on Littleton" and thinks of "Belinda." There are times when he resolves to be resigned to the worst, which is a possible refusal from Miss Burwell, and to cultivate "a perfect resignation to the Divine Will." He will "consider that whatever does happen must happen, and that by our uneasiness we cannot prevent the blow

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

before it does fall, but we may add to its force after it has fallen." In short, he hopes to have a "pious and unshaken resignation." These are good words for a man who will, in later life, be branded as an infidel by some of his contemporaries.

At last—joyous chance—there comes an opportunity when Thomas Jefferson can once more see "Belinda" face to face. How his poor heart throbs at the thought! He has gone to Williamsburg to attend the sessions of the General Court, like a dutiful law-student (possibly also as an ardent lover). At a ball in the Raleigh Tavern he meets the siren who, we may shrewdly suspect, has been enjoying herself these many moons without giving more than a passing thought to poor Tom. There are all sorts of dances at the ball, and we can see the shy glance of the lover as he touches the hand of pretty Rebecca Burwell when the two glide through the stately figures of a minuet. How the color must come and go in that freckled, expressive face of his. How impassive is the look that comes from the beautiful eyes of "Belinda." Will the dancing never stop, so that he may take the girl into some convenient corner, there to pour into her ears his hopes, fears, and all the sufferings of the past months? What a mockery, he must think, is all this merrymaking when one man's heart is nigh to breaking.

After a while there is a lull in the dancing. Happy yet fearful moment! He leads Mistress Burwell to a



## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

place away from the dancers. Now he will tell her all, and ask her the one question that is worth the asking. But what a ghastly failure he makes of it, to be sure. He tries to say something eloquent, yet only manages to stammer a few broken sentences, relieved by horrible pauses, and he feels, as a sickening shudder runs up and down his spine, that he is making a very great fool of himself. "Belinda" looks at him helplessly. She can neither accept nor refuse a man who has not the nerve to put his proposal into plain English. He leads her back, at last, to the dancers. Timidity has conquered the man who, in a few years, will not hesitate to defy all the might and power of tyrannical England.

In a few days he tries again. His courage will not enable him to ask the lady outright whether she will be his wife, but he circles around the subject, and hints that at some future time he will ask for her hand. How can the poor girl say "Yes" to such a hint, even if she is anxious so to do? And if she wants to say "No," merely to put the boy out of his misery as soon as possible, she must also keep silent, in the face of so much bashfulness and indirection. Yet there is that in her manner which tells Jefferson that all his longing and heart-sickness have been in vain. He finds, at last, that he is too late; the heart of Rebecca Burwell has been given to another. Fool that he was, thinks Tom to himself. Perhaps, had he hastened to Williamsburg before this, he might have ousted the successful rival; but noth-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

ing can prevent him now from considering himself the most miserable man in all the wide world. He can never again look into a woman's face with pleasure. His future has nothing more in store for him. His life is a hopeless, forlorn wreck. He is exactly what many another young fellow before and since has considered himself to be.

A few months after the ball at the Raleigh Tavern Miss Rebecca Burwell is married to the more favored suitor and Thomas is left heart-broken. John Page, who has likewise had his own love affair, is jilted by another cruel maiden. Mr. Page, like a true philosopher, at once begins upon a new flirtation. Jefferson, however, can not think of such inconstancy. He vows that his heart is "dead to love forever." Williamsburg no longer has for him the slightest charm. He hates the sight of it so much that he calls it "Devilsburg."

Yet it remained for Jefferson, like thousands of other hapless swains, to find out that first loves are by no means fatal maladies. He went on studying law, and woke up, one fine morning, to discover that the load upon his bruised heart had quite gone. It was still hard to think of "Belinda" without tender regret, yet the world did not seem desolate any more, and the old high ambitions, which had once surged so manfully in his breast, began to reappear. This was the first sign of a return to normal conditions. After a time he could even think of the false one without a tremor. Then, a little

## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

later, he began to dance at other people's weddings with smiling face, and perhaps encountered among the guests, and without a sigh of regret, the sweet features of "Belinda."

It was not long ere Jefferson began to take pleasure in assuming the simple duties of a country gentleman. He became a justice of the peace and a vestryman of his parish. These were positions which, had he still been a romantic swain, he would have scorned to seek. Furthermore, he settled down into a practical farmer with as much zest as if he had never known anything about Cupid, and he put his whole heart into the work. He went on studying law, was finally admitted to the bar, and took interest, also, in that profession. Then he became a member of the Virginia Legislature. Still he remained a bachelor. Had his experience with "Belinda" given him a distaste for matrimony? No doubt that question was often asked in the part of Virginia where he was already so well known and so deeply respected. He had, indeed, once said to John Page that if Rebecca Burwell refused him he would never offer himself to another.

But the day came when Thomas Jefferson fell in love for a second time, and more successfully. Perhaps it was a quieter passion than the one he had had for "Belinda," and therefore perhaps deeper as well, for there was no denying the sincerity of his love for Mistress Martha Skelton, a beautiful widow of twenty-two, child-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

less, and the daughter of his friend and fellow-lawyer, John Wayles. She was fond of music; so was Jefferson. She played delightfully on the spinet; he had a pretty skill with the violin. They played together when Jefferson would go over to visit her father on his plantation, "The Forest," and played so well together that it was finally agreed they might prove equally harmonious in a lifelong duet. The young Virginian, who had now developed into a good-looking man, and had lost the rawness of his William and Mary days, proposed with all necessary gallantry. He was duly accepted. On New Year's Day of 1772, the two were married at "The Forest," with the assistance of several clergymen and an abundance of music. Soon afterwards they started out, by way of a honeymoon, on a wintry trip to Monticello, the new home of the groom. As they proceeded on their journey towards the mountains the snow increased, until their carriage could no longer move. Finally they had to leave the coach in a drift, and mount the horses. When, at last, they reached Monticello, it was late at night, cold and dreary, and all the servants had gone to bed. The fires were out; the inside of the new house was dismal and freezing. But Love laughs at such trifles. They burst open the door and rekindled the fires, and thus, with great good humor, their housekeeping began.

Mrs. Jefferson is described as a radiant creature, with pretty coloring and expressive features, a great mass of auburn hair, and a graceful figure and deportment. She

## A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

---

was a woman of mind, and, it must be confessed, far more fit to be a constant companion for her husband than would have been the elusive "Belinda." She was fond of literature, which was something that most Virginia ladies then cared little about, and her voice was pleasant to listen to as she accompanied herself on the spinet or harpsichord. The good lady lived until 1782, when she died four months after giving birth to her sixth child. As she was sinking she solemnly asked her husband never to marry again, for the sake of their children. He gave her the promise, and kept it. He had loved her well: when she was gone he was almost crazed. He staggered from the room into his library, where he fainted. For a time it was feared that he, too, had passed away. The family placed his apparently inanimate body on a cot. In a few minutes the stricken man revived, only to go off the same night into a perfect frenzy of grief. For three weeks he stayed in one room, attended by his little daughter, Martha. Day and night he would walk up and down, up and down, like a caged lion. When, at last, he emerged from his room it was to roam about the country, like some desolate spirit who could never know happiness more. Time finally healed the wound, and new attention to public duties brought solace and gradual contentment. But the woman whose death could cause such despair must have been worthy the love of such a man.

Forgotten Rebecca Burwell! You were, after all, only

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

an example of the truth that a man's first love is an illness which may seem fatal but which often only turns out to be a passing indisposition. Jefferson lived to look back smilingly at his one-time passion. "Belinda" became to him nothing save a shadow. Yet we wonder if, when life was nearly spent and the old man sat by the fire in his library at Monticello, he ever called to mind the old days in Williamsburg. Perhaps in thought he grew young once more and saw Rebecca's face shining at him from the embers.



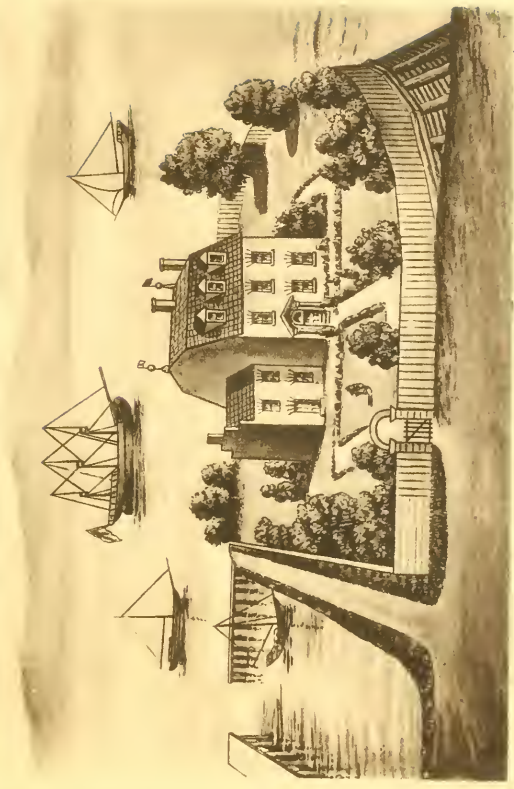




# CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---







## VI

### CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

**I**T was in the early thirties of the eighteenth century that there came to the good town of New York, to rule in due state as Governor of the whole colony, a certain Englishman by adoption and Irishman by birth, one Colonel William Cosby. The townsmen were already loyal to the English government, although many of them had the blood of the sturdy Dutch in their veins, and it might be supposed that they would be ready to extend a cordial welcome to the new functionary. But as they had undergone unpleasant experiences with at least two of their Governors from England, the New Yorkers were wary. They remembered, for instance, the meteoric career of Edward Hyde, Lord Cornbury, who had come over to their town in 1702, and of whom weird stories were still told in tavern and drawing-room. Would Colonel Cosby prove to be a second Cornbury?

Lord Cornbury, who was a cousin of "good Queen Anne," through his relationship to her mother, was a worthless profligate, heavily burdened with debt. He was sent over to America to retrieve his fortunes, at the expense, of course, of the unfortunate people of Manhattan Island. His wife, who prided herself upon a

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

beautiful ear (which had been fair enough, she said, to make my Lord fall in love with her) had as lean a purse and as expensive habits as her aristocratic husband. Ostentation was her god, and while she may have affected to look down upon the good Dutch families of New York she was very anxious, notwithstanding, to impress them with the proper idea of her grandeur. But how is one to distil grandeur without the necessary ingredient of gold? She was neither the first, nor the last, to ask herself this question.

After thinking deeply upon the matter Lady Cornbury, who was never troubled in all her life by over-delicacy or conscientious scruple, hit upon an ingenious expedient. In the meantime, after her arrival in New York, she charmed "society," as we would now term it, by the extreme condescension of her manners. She and her noble husband seemed to vie one with the other in doing all they could to be gracious to their new subjects. In return for this politeness the great ladies of the town, among them Madame Van Courtlandt, treated them to a series of dinners, at which the Governor drank unlimited wine and professed himself greatly benefited and pleased by the vintages that were spread out before him on the hospitable boards. So far, so good. It began to look as if the sojourn of the couple was to resolve itself into a kind of political honeymoon, or a love-feast.

But watch the cunning scheme of my Lady Cornbury. She soon announced that she was desirous, in order to

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

give *éclat* to her position, to select from among the New York maidens a number of "ladies of honor," who were to reside with her in the Governor's mansion. Whereupon the daughters of the first families were thrown into a veritable flutter of pleasant anticipation. What joy! They had heard of queens who had maids of honor, and here was the relative of a queen who projected a miniature court of her own! The thought was dazzling. So the lucky girls who were invited, much to the envy of the unlucky ones, to reside with Lady Cornbury went into as great transports of delight as their somewhat phlegmatic dispositions would permit. They hastened to the gubernatorial residence to play their ornamental parts.

The parts, alas, were not to be ornamental. The maids of honor soon found that their economical mistress was too poor to keep regular servants, and that they were expected to do all the menial work of the house, even to acting, on occasion, as cooks and scullions. Thus vanished all their visions of semi-regal splendor. Their one idea now was—to get away from my Lady Cornbury.

That, however, was not an easy thing to do. My Lady, being a common, ill-bred shrew, was unwilling to part with domestics to whom she had to pay no wages. At the mere mention of departure she would sometimes pounce, with all the ferocity of a virago, upon the poor disappointed *fräuleins*, and forbid them to leave the house. This system of forcible detention went on until it became

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

necessary for the parents of the maids of honor to take them away in the very face of loud, vulgar protests from the lady. Then, after calling the retiring maids all sorts of hard names, she enticed other girls into her house. The newcomers, however, fared no better, and Lady Cornbury soon found that her ingenious scheme for saving the hire of servants had come to naught. From being the most popular woman in New York she quickly became the most unpopular of them all.

The Governor, too, quickly descended from his high estate, and made of himself a public scandal. Once, after a drinking-bout, he dressed himself in his wife's clothes and paraded up and down the then rustic Broadway. It was night, and the moon was out. So uproarious did he wax that the officer of the watch arrested him as an intoxicated vagrant. The guard was "amazed beyond description when he found that his prisoner was none other than the Governor of the province, in a highly hilarious condition; and the watchman could scarcely be induced to release his Excellency, as he considered it the duty of the watch to carry all prisoners to the guard-house, no matter what was their degree."<sup>1</sup>

No wonder that all the respectable people would have nothing more to do with the Governor and his wife. But Lady Cornbury, as shameless as she was impecunious, hit upon another expedient for swindling. She would

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Mrs. Van Rensselaer's attractive *Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta*, Smith's *History of New York*, etc.



## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

drive up in her handsome coach to some prosperous-looking home, alight in great state, chat for a little time with the occupants, and then, with the assistance of a groom, carry away with her any ornament that she thought a bit pretty. The consequence was that the wives of the burghers began to fear the rattle of my Lady's carriage as they feared the plague. When they heard the familiar rolling of the wheels they would run hither and thither through the house, hiding anything that they thought might catch her fancy. It may be added that this noble thief would generally pawn the things she had thus secured from her loyal subjects.

There must have been no end of rejoicing when her ladyship died several years later and was buried in the graveyard of Trinity Church with much pomp and pageantry. There must have been, too, many a cheerful face in evidence at that funeral. No doubt the undertaker looked melancholy. He had reason so to look; his bill for the interment of the lady would never be paid either by Lord Cornbury or by any one else. As for my Lord he was finally recalled to England by his cousin, Queen Anne, after having first been thrown into a New York jail for debt.

There was another Royal Governor of whom the New Yorkers had rather curious recollections. He was Richard Coote, Earl of Bellomont, a dashing, but elderly cavalier who brought with him to New York, much against her will, a young and beautiful wife, of whom he

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

was insanely jealous. The Countess of Bellomont was one of the greatest gamblers of her day, and extravagant, not to say dissolute enough to put many a high-living man of the early eighteenth century to the blush. She was not prepared, therefore, to find Manhattan very exciting under any circumstances. But what must have been her feelings when Lord Bellomont, fearing lest some of the young burghers of the island would fall in love with her, shut her up in the Governor's mansion, where she became little more than a prisoner within gilded bars. Poor lady! Perhaps she may have employed her solitude in atoning for all her past sins, but we are prone to be skeptical on that point. It was her lordly husband, by-the-way, who was a friend and patron of the notorious Captain Kidd, and who was suspected (no human being can now say whether justly or unjustly) of sharing some of the rich plunder which that enterprising New Yorker was wont to filch from the holds of unprotected English merchantmen.

Is it any wonder, then, that when the long-suffering New Yorkers heard of the coming of Colonel William Cosby they should have wondered what manner of gentleman this new ruler might be? They sought to learn all that they could about him. The knowledge thus obtained was not over-assuring. The Colonel was a polished Anglo-Irish swindler, who had been recalled from his Governorship of the Island of Minorca because of his peculations! Stealing, however, on the part of

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

British officials was not considered much of a crime in those easy days when rank or influence protected many a rascal. It was the epoch of the great Robert Walpole, who took so cynical a view of the honesty of his countrymen that he considered every Englishman "had his price." The real crime, if one stole public funds or government moneys, was in being found out. As that happened to be the crime of which poor Cosby was guilty, he was brought back to England—and soon rewarded by an appointment to the richer Governorship of New York. The townsmen shook their heads when they heard these things, and asked themselves if they were to be forced to undergo a second Lord Cornbury.

After a time Colonel Cosby, accompanied by his wife and daughter, reaches the port of New York. The new Governor looks pompous, arrogant, self-important; there is a glint in his eyes which suggests a fellow who is on the search for gold. Madame Cosby, whose near relationship to an Earl has not apparently added to her breeding, looks bored at the sight of the vulgar Americans who have turned out to greet the Colonel. She makes a mental resolution that she will have nothing to do with the women of New York, and that her one ambition will be the saving up of as much money as possible. Not a whit, she thinks, shall be spent in entertaining any of these stupid natives—and not one man among the lot shall be introduced to her daughter. That daughter's

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

name is Eleanor. She is young and pretty: she will soon be the heroine of a romance which will set the whole town agog. She is not so stiff as her mother, and, indeed, from her manner one might suppose that she would be quite glad to meet some of the young burghers. And when one regards her rosy cheeks and shining eyes it is plain that the aforesaid young burghers would be only too glad to respond.

Who is the courtly gentleman who is bowing ceremoniously to the Governor, and making some very formal announcement? It is Chief Justice Lewis Morris, who is informing Cosby that the Assembly of New York has voted to make him (for alleged services in London connected with the Sugar Bill) a present of seven hundred and fifty pounds sterling. It is a princely gift; but why does our friend the Governor frown? Surely one generally makes some sign of pleasure when one has seven hundred and fifty pounds as a gratuity in prospect. There must be something wrong, however, for the frown on the Governor's face only deepens. Perhaps he has not heard aright what the Chief Justice said. He may not understand that this money is intended for his own private purse. For—yes, "Gad zooks!" "Odds bodkins!" "Zounds!" The new Governor is swearing! Think of it! There *must* be a grave mistake. Yet listen. The Governor, after indulging in a few more choice expressions, begins to abuse the New Yorkers in round, set terms, because they have not made him a larger gift!

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

Was ever such a piece of boorishness heard of this side of the water? The Chief Justice regards the rude swindler in veritable amazement. Colonel Morris is a gentleman; he cannot fathom how this English specimen of the porcine family can look decent men in the face after such an exhibition. And this is the man that King George II has sent over to govern some thousands of his loyal subjects! No wonder that before another half century has gone by the misruled Americans will have severed their allegiance to the British crown.

The Governor himself is not a bit mortified by his exhibition of temper. He is coarse to the backbone, and he has, furthermore, the true British contempt for provincials. What are these countrified, half Dutch New Yorkers, that he should put on manners for *them*? He will only play the gentleman when there is something to be gained by it. When he goes into a foreign country he will take with him the inestimable privilege of abusing the inhabitants. As for this paltry seven hundred and fifty pounds—bah! it is an absurdly small amount. The burghers are getting richer and richer day by day as trade increases. Let them treble the gift, at least, or multiply it as many times as possible.

But hush! Colonel Morris is answering the Governor. Listen! Yes! He is telling Cosby what he thinks of him, and saying that in future he will have no dealings with the boor, saving on official business. At supper, the same evening, hundreds of tongues are repeating the

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

manly speech of the Chief Justice and condemning the upstart Governor.

The weeks roll on, as Cosby and his wife make themselves more and more obnoxious to the wisest people of New York. The one idea of the husband is to screw money out of the Americans: the one idea of the wife is to be a snob. Yet, in spite of the superciliousness of Madame Cosby, she has not half the refinement of the good citizens of New York. They may be a trifle provincial in their ideals (*i. e.*, they do not gamble, or take delight in breaking several of the commandments), but they can put on a pretty front at an assembly or concert. They dress with neatness, and a fair amount of taste; they are sprightly and good-humored, with admirable manners, albeit a trifle stilted, and they keep plentifully laden tables for the comfort both of themselves and the welcome visitors within their hospitable gates. They have, in fine, the habits and accomplishments of colonial gentlefolk, and they are, unlike their Governor, neither swindlers nor blacklegs. But what cares Madame Cosby, sister of the puissant Earl of Halifax, for all this? She is an Englishwoman, and the wife of the Governor of New York, and can afford to be proud and overbearing.

And what of Mistress Eleanor Cosby? She is deeply engaged in a serious flirtation with a very gay aristocrat who is visiting New York. He is Lord Augustus Fitzroy, son of the Duke of Grafton. Madame Cosby is delighted when she sees, with those shrewd, lynx eyes of

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

hers, that Fitzroy has fallen in love with the sweet face of Mistress Eleanor. It is an alluring thought, that she, Madame Cosby, may become the mother-in-law of a Duke's child. She will do all she can to forward the romance. No doubt she confides her hopes to her husband, the Governor; but the Governor is afraid to connive at the love affair. The Duke of Grafton is all powerful in English politics, and his Grace may disapprove of the match. Therefore will the wily Governor pretend to know nothing about it. He determines to shut his eyes to the doings of the pair, and he does shut them.

Madame Cosby, however, has no such conscientious scruples. When she learns that Fitzroy has at last thrown himself at the feet of Eleanor, who has accepted him, she resolves to bring matters to a climax. It is impossible, owing to the caution and the blindness of the Governor, to give the young couple the desired display of a public wedding ceremony. There must be an elopement, which will have the sequel of marriage, and at the same time save Cosby any unpleasant reproaches from the Duke of Grafton. Happy thought. Madame Cosby begins to make the necessary preparations with as much zest as if she, rather than her daughter, were to be the bride. The daughter, be it added, is only too glad to have so determined a match-maker in the family.

On a certain bright day there is an air of suppressed excitement in the residence of the Governor. This building, known as "The White Hall," was at the corner of

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

what are now Whitehall and State Streets. Miss Eleanor goes about the house with a heightened color in her attractive face, and Madame Cosby cultivates an air of mysterious importance. A practiced eye may detect that something startling is about to happen. The Governor himself has an air of pristine innocence that might be almost too studied to deceive the Duke of Grafton, were his Grace in New York. Lord Augustus Fitzroy is conspicuous by his absence. No one speaks his name.

Evening comes. Suddenly Madame Cosby, looking as determined as only a harsh-visaged female can, runs hastily up to the servants' quarters, and proceeds to turn the keys in the doors of the surprised domestics. There is to be something unusual, she thinks, and the servants shall not spoil matters by raising an alarm. Then, having taken this precaution, the lady creeps into the room of Eleanor, who is, no doubt, pale and trembling, as befits her romance. Madame throws a huge red cloak over the girl's white dress. Next she leads her through the house and down to the gateway of the garden. Here Fitzroy, looking handsome and impatient, awaits her with some of his boon companions. There awaits her, too, a clergyman of the Church of England. He is chaplain to the Governor of the Province of New York, yet he has climbed a fence to assist at this irregular function. The Governor himself is absent. He has taken good care to play his rôle well. The fact is that he is at his club, and getting gloriously intoxicated into the bargain.



## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

No sooner is the wedding party—for such it is—duly and secretly assembled than the chaplain proceeds to make Eleanor Cosby and Lord Augustus Fitzroy man and wife. The following day, when the Governor has recovered from the effects of his club, he is, of course, dumbfounded at the news that his daughter has eloped. How astonishing! Who was the presumptuous groom? The Lord Augustus Fitzroy. Well, well! How strange! The Governor is willing to take a hundred oaths that he is the most surprised man in all the province, and vows that never before has he been so fooled by a girl.

Yet while his Excellency is protesting that he is a most startled father, there is one girl, not his daughter, who is engaged, in very truth, in the business of fooling him. She is Mistress Euphemia Morris, elder daughter of the Chief Justice Morris who has such a contempt for Cosby, and, as it so happens, she is engaged to marry a Captain Norris, commander of an English man-of-war now anchored off New York. Miss Morris, like her father, despises the rude Governor. Now her chance has come to show his Excellency, with the incidental aid of her lover, of what stuff American maidens are made.

The thing occurs in this wise. The Governor has made himself so obnoxious to the most patriotic people of New York, and has tried to lord it over them with so high a hand, that they resolve in secret to send Chief Justice Morris over to England to put their grievances before the government. Now this is exactly what the

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Governor would not want done, if he knew of the plan. He already fears that some one of his enemies may sail away from the port, bound on such a mission. Accordingly he issues an order whereby no one is to be allowed to sail unless the passenger bears a permit graciously signed by the Governor. That is a bit of autocracy of which even the King of England would be slow to avail himself; but what of that? These wretched provincials have no rights that a high and mighty Governor, the brother-in-law to the Earl of Halifax, is bound to respect.

Chief Justice Morris knows that if he is to get away to England he must do so by stratagem. Cosby will never grant an opponent a permit to leave the harbor of New York. So he asks, demurely enough, for permission to go to his home. This is a trifle wily on the part of Colonel Morris, for the "home" intended happens to be England, and not his place in the country. However, it is supposed that he refers to the latter, and the necessary permit is obtained from the unsuspecting Governor.

So far this is easy work for the Chief Justice. But it is incumbent on him, as he has not yet departed, to be very wary. He is now at his residence in Morrisania. Before he sails he must secure from his friend James Alexander, in New York, certain documents which are intended to prove to the English government the worthlessness of Governor Cosby. Accordingly he takes into his confidence his daughter Euphemia, the *fiancée* of Captain Norris. She is instructed to go to New York, apparently

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

bent on paying an innocent visit to Mrs. Alexander, and must surreptitiously obtain from the latter's husband the incriminating papers. Miss Euphemia is only too glad to assist in such an adventure: she is young, and romantic blood bubbles through her veins. So she dons a becoming dress, puts a velvet riding mask over her animated face, and is soon ready for the trip.

"The journey in those days was long and tiresome," says Mrs. Van Rensselaer, "the Harlem River having to be crossed in a scow, poled by two negroes, from the mainland to a point on Mana-ha-ta, where the horses and coach were kept. The latter was a heavy, cumbersome affair, hung on great straps, with a hammer-cloth covering the coachman's seat; the doors were emblazoned with the family coat-of-arms and the crest of a flaming castle, with the motto, *Tandem Vincetur*. The horses were the strong, ugly geldings of Holland blood that were necessary in order to drag such a cumbersome affair through the mire and over the stones. . . . A negro coachman dressed in a livery of pale blue cloth with silver and wearing a triangular cocked hat trimmed with broad silver lace, sat on the box and skilfully drove his clumsy horses, and a negro boy hung by the tassels behind, wearing the same livery, with the exception that a jockey-cap of Turkish leather, with silver seams and band, took the place of the coachman's cocked hat."

No sooner had Miss Morris reached the home of the Alexanders than she had a private interview with Mr.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Alexander, who gave her, with the utmost secrecy, the needful documents. The two must have felt like the conspirators in a play. There were many cautions and whisperings between them: then the girl hurried away to join her father, who had, in the meantime, journeyed on alone to New York. The Chief Justice and his daughter now began the return trip to Morrisania. On their way they saw the frigate Tartar, commanded by Captain Norris, passing through Hell Gate. Father and daughter exchanged significant smiles. Well they might, for Norris was to give aid and due effect to their little plot.

Euphemia Morris was not a girl who would be content with mere protestations of affection on the part of her lover. She was ready to put his vows to the test (being practical despite her romantic spirit), and had already enlisted him in a plan to aid her father in his attempt to steal off to England. It was a case of "Help my father, and you have my hand." The Captain, at the risk of throwing himself into hot water, had gallantly responded to the invitation. It was arranged that the Tartar should anchor off Morrisania that same evening, and then sail away to England the very moment that Colonel Morris boarded her. No doubt the lovely Euphemia wished that she, too, were to take the voyage. Still, she could comfort herself with the reflection that she had for her *fiancé* a man true as steel, who had already proved his love in a manner from which many a carpet-knight might have shrunk in dismay. One thing she knew, and

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

it was, indeed, a pleasant thing to which to look forward. There would be opportunity for her, amid the bustle of departure, to have one farewell talk with Captain Norris.

That evening there was an unusual scene on the landing at Morrisania. Euphemia Morris, in whose face shone alternately joy and sorrow—joy at the conduct of her lover, and sorrow at taking leave of him and her father—was listening to a torrent of whispered words from the Captain. We can all surmise the import of those words. The Chief Justice was bidding farewell to his other children and to Mrs. Morris. They were looking tearful, as they might, for a journey across the ocean, even in a man-of-war, was accounted a dangerous thing more than a century and a half ago. Out in the deep water was anchored the Tartar, from whose bulwarks men peered curiously into the darkness. How Governor Cosby would have ground his teeth, had he seen this little episode; but the Governor was not there to see. In all probability he was in his usual state of forgetfulness at the club.

At last the lapse of time warned the Chief Justice that he should be off. It might be supposed that this thought should have occurred first to Captain Norris, but as the latter was young, very human, and much in love, why should we blame him for a delay that must have been so tempting? As he whispered soft nothings into the ears of the clinging Euphemia, there was a cry from one of

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

the party. It came from Colonel Morris, who shouted that there was no time to be lost. A few more words, a something that sounded suspiciously like a kiss, and then the naval officer tore himself away. In another minute sailors were rapidly rowing the gig of Captain Norris over to the frigate. Another two or three minutes, and the Captain, with Colonel Morris near him, was walking the quarter-deck of his vessel. Soon the Tartar was under sail, making directly for the ocean. Governor Cosby was outwitted. In the pocket of the Chief Justice's coat were the papers which set forth the Governor's treachery, greed and incompetency.

In this wise, through the connivance of a woman, did Cosby wake up one fine morning to find that one of his greatest enemies had given him the slip. It turned out, however, as Colonel Morris learned upon his arrival in England, that the Governor had such interest with the government, through his connections with influential people, that it was impossible to dislodge him from his position. The English Lords of Trade cared very little whether or not the New York "rustics" were dissatisfied with their ruler. But we may be sure that Cosby and his sour-visaged wife never forgave Miss Euphemia Morris for her share in the conspiracy. That young lady afterwards married the Captain who had risked his commission in her behalf, and we hear of her as one of the married belles of a New York assembly.

There was another New York woman, this time a de-

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

voted wife rather than a *fiancée*, who soon set her own wit against the wit of the Governor, and came out of the ordeal with flying colors. This was Mrs. Alexander, wife of the before-mentioned Mr. James Alexander, and one of the most beautiful young matrons in the colony. She had more than beauty, fortunately enough; she was bright of mind and full of energy. Never, indeed, did she show this brightness and energy more strikingly than during the "Zenger" excitement. How the name of Zenger did stir up the inhabitants of the town, to be sure! The name is almost forgotten now, save by the students of history, although the bearer of it did more than any one else has done since to vindicate the liberty of the press in America.

John Peter Zenger, a German by birth, was the publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal*—a new paper that gave great comfort to the honest citizens by its attacks on the sins, personal and official, of the Governor. The articles were written, it was thought, by James Alexander and William Smith, the great lawyer; but, although the Governor had a shrewd suspicion that such was the case, and offered a reward to any one who would discover the authorship of the offending criticisms, the mystery was not solved. At last the Governor had Zenger imprisoned. It was a bold move; bold, indeed, to the extent of absolutism, for it meant, if it were to mean anything, that honest fault-finding against a public official would be treated as treason.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

No sooner had the printer been brought into court for trial, with James Alexander and William Smith as his counsel, than James DeLancey, then Chief Justice (himself a great toady to the Governor) did a strange, illegal thing. Fearing that two such good lawyers as Alexander and Smith would secure from the jury a verdict in favor of the defendant, he promptly ordered that their two names should be stricken from the roll of attorneys-at-law in the province. No Czar of all the Russias could have been more brazenly unjust and despotic.

The people of New York were astounded, and, worse yet, frightened. What was to be their fate under such a tyrannical state of things? Mr. Alexander began to think very seriously of the advisability of moving to Philadelphia, where he might practice law, and enjoy a greater measure of freedom. But Mrs. Alexander was made of sterner stuff. "Why should we give in to our enemies?" was the substance of the question that she asked her disgusted husband. "Instead of going away to a new province, where we are unknown, and without influence, let us stay here to fight the Governor and his friends—and conquer them!" She hinted that if no New York lawyer now dared to defend poor Zenger, after the arbitrary action of DeLancey, help might be secured from Philadelphia. There was Andrew Hamilton, an attorney of rare power, who might snap his fingers at the Chief Justice in New York. The latter could not pre-



## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

vent Hamilton from carrying on his profession in Pennsylvania. Disbarment in the courts of New York would offer no terrors for one who was wont to practice in Philadelphia. "Let us secretly communicate with Andrew Hamilton," urged Mrs. Alexander.

The suggestion seems to have met with approval; but the problem now was how to see this Mr. Hamilton without attracting the suspicion of the Governor's henchmen, headed by DeLancey? For it was needful that when the case of Zenger, which had been continued, should again come up in court, the new counsel for the printer should, as it were, take the Chief Justice unawares, without giving word or warning. Otherwise DeLancey would have time to devise some plot against him. Thereupon the woman's wit of pretty Mistress Alexander came to the rescue. She would travel to Philadelphia herself to ask Mr. Hamilton if he would take charge of Zenger's case! It was a brilliant stroke of genius. Her husband and Mr. Smith were charmed at the idea. Mrs. Alexander should battle for the freedom of the press, and the liberties of the people.

The greatest caution, however, was necessary. If the Governor got wind of her mission, Heaven alone knew what would be the outcome. So the lady began to dissemble—and we all know how much better a woman can dissemble than a man. She gave out, with a great deal of ostentation, that she was going to Perth Amboy

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

on private business, and she sailed away from the wharf in New York with as much publicity as possible. When, however, the schooner reached Perth Amboy, Mrs. Alexander suddenly found that her private business was not very important. She stole away from the place in a coach, and was soon rattling through the country to Philadelphia. Sewed tightly within her silken petticoat were the legal papers prepared by her husband for the Zenger case. These she was to present to Mr. Hamilton.

In due time Mrs. Alexander was back again in New York. She told her friends that she had had a most successful trip, in attending to that private business at Perth Amboy. Later the trial of the printer was called up again in court. All New York, not forgetting the Governor, was asking the question: "What lawyer among us will have the bravery to defend Zenger?" Cosby was quite sure that John Peter Zenger would find himself without counsel. Was not the pliable tool of a DeLancey ready to disbar any New York attorney who would dare to brave the Governor's displeasure? What, therefore, was the discomfiture of Cosby and DeLancey when the distinguished Philadelphian, Andrew Hamilton, whom they dared not serve as they would one of their own lawyers, walked into court as the accredited representative of the prisoner.

How the Governor squirmed when he listened to the brilliant speech in behalf of the defendant, whose only

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

crime was that he had published the truth. How the jury craned their necks to hear every word of this Philadelphia eloquence. How the face of Chief Justice DeLancey grew gloomier and gloomier of expression. And how the people in the court-room did cheer, to be sure, when the jury brought in a verdict of "Not guilty!" The verdict meant that the press was not to be enslaved, and that the faults of a public official, even be he a Royal Governor, were not to be regarded as sacred.

The cheers sent a flush of anger surging into the cheeks of the Chief Justice, for they sounded like an insult for himself. "The court will order any one who huzzas sent to prison!" he cried, in a great passion, with kindling eyes. There was, however, one in the audience who was not to be overawed by this judicial bullying. It was the dashing Captain Norris, our friend of the frigate Tartar, who had just married Euphemia Morris, on his return from England. "Huzzas," he cried, "are common in Westminster Hall!" and he went on to justify the custom with an eloquence that one might hardly have expected from a naval officer. Then there was renewed cheering in the court-room, which was taken up by the crowd in the street. The day was won for Zenger, and, better still, for liberty of opinion. It is pleasant, as we look back on this scene, to reflect that the man who put in so manly an appeal for American freedom, although himself an Englishman, should have been the husband of Euphemia Morris. Captain Norris

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

was, indeed, a gentleman. Had there been many Englishmen like him over in the colonies the Revolution might have been postponed for years.

And what of that handsome schemer, pretty Mrs. Alexander? She was the most pleased woman in all New York, excepting possibly Mrs. Norris, when she saw the complete success of her intrigue. Andrew Hamilton was the hero of the hour, much to the chagrin of the Governor and his underlings. He was obliged to run the gauntlet of a public dinner given in his honor, a ball, and a quantity of hand-shaking and congratulations. When he began his return journey to Philadelphia he went off with all the pomp due to a conquering King.

Cosby had received a blow from which he never recovered. He was not a thin-skinned man, for rascals in office seldom are, but to recall the triumph of Zenger and the rejoicings of the populace made him gnash his teeth with rage. One may be even worse than his Excellency, and yet smart under public censure. So the Governor "went into a consumption," and there was little to console him in his illness save, perhaps, the thought that his pretty daughter Eleanor, Lady Augustus Fitzroy, had given birth to a son who would become, in future years, Duke of Grafton. Through these final days his wife was constant to him, as if to show that she had, at least, some good in her vulgar heart. He died late in the winter of 1735-36, and few men were hypocritical enough to

## CONSPIRACIES AND CUPID

---

pretend to any sorrow. The next year the Messrs. James Alexander and William Smith were reinstated at the bar. The administration of Cosby had not been altogether wasted; for it had shown that even at that early day there were two women who were ready to aid in preserving the liberties of America.













## VII

### B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

**T**HERE was a mighty unrest in the province of Massachusetts Bay for some time preceding the historic effusion of blood at Lexington and Concord where the embattled farmers fired the shot "heard round the world," and thus somewhat unexpectedly put in motion the American Revolution. Gage and his army of red-coats had possession of Boston, while the patriots, as they saw but too clearly that England intended to turn the colonies into helpless dependencies, could only watch and pray—and do something more practical. They could prepare. Old muskets were brought from fireplace or closet and polished up; an eye was kept on any powder and ball that might be conveniently near; leadenware was secretly moulded into bullets; conferences were held at dead of night to discuss the future and devise ways and means for defense, should there unfortunately arise any necessity for such extremity. It was like living on the cone of Vesuvius, with an eruption in prospect.

The weeks went on and the patriots became more determined, as it was made plainer and plainer that England looked upon all who opposed her blind arrogance as

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

rebellious upstarts. They dismantled the old battery at Charleston and carried away the guns, to save them from being turned upon themselves; they organized militia companies in the towns outside of Boston; they collected military stores. While they were doing this, the red-coats were swaggering about Boston, treating the citizens as they might treat inferior beings, and predicting freely that the colonials would never have enough pluck to stand up against half a company of well-armed British regulars. Once a British colonel and some troops marched to Salem to seize the cannon deposited there, but the Salemites raised the draw of the Old North Bridge, and the Colonel marched home again without the ordnance. At another time soldiers were sent out from Boston to overawe the inhabitants of a neighboring town. These and other events roused the whole countryside to a pitch of feverish excitement. More British troops were on their way to America. It was known, too, that good King George had made up his mind to crush the subjects who had once cherished for him, while he deserved it, the most unstinted loyalty and affection. All this mine of disaffection, therefore, needed but a light to set it off into explosion.

That light was soon to be applied. It was now the spring of 1775. The Provincial Congress, at Concord, was taking measures to raise an army and to resist aggression. Its members appointed a day of prayer and fasting, and calmly awaited what they wisely believed to

## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

be the inevitable. In Boston General Gage had turned the Old South Church into a riding-school for his cavalry, to show his truly English contempt for the feelings of an honorable enemy. Every night the taverns of the town resounded with the toasts of half-drunken British officers, who drank "Confusion to the —— rebels!"

Now it happened that in one of the regiments which domineered the Bostonians there was a certain Samuel Lee, an Englishman of thirty or thereabouts. He was a good-looking fellow, and though only a private, he came of an old and respected family across the Atlantic. The Lees were Tories, of the dyed-in-the-wool kind. They looked upon the Americans as ungracious clowns who should be punished for daring to think there was wrong in anything that an august sovereign might desire to impose upon them. The sum and substance of the philosophy held by Samuel Lee's father was: "We are English, and, therefore, we cannot err. If the Americans differ from us—why, then the rascally Americans are wrong!" The old gentleman suggested very strongly the complacent French lady who complained to Benjamin Franklin that she had never come across any one who was exactly right in all his or her views. So Lee had said to his son, Samuel: "Go to the war, and don't come back till the rebels in America are all conquered—or dead!"

Young Lee had enlisted forthwith. He was now quartered in Boston at the barracks of the Tenth Regiment.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

No doubt his heart had been full of vengeance as he sailed across the sea in a transport, and listened to the boastful talk of his fellow-soldiers, who were loud in their contempt for the "rebels." But there came a change after he had been in Boston for a few weeks. He saw that the despised colonials were staunch, honest people, many of them possessed of refinement and worldly substance, and all of them imbued with that love of freedom which any Englishman should have been proud to foster. He saw, too, that their grievances were real, not imaginary. It began to dawn on him—for he was without the average insular blindness—that he was soon to fight against a much-wronged foe. But, alas, was he not a soldier of the King, and did not honor require him to stick to his colors? He was a brave man, and true, but as winter passed into the spring of 1775 he grew more and more unhappy.

Yet a man may fight for a wrong cause and feel no uneasiness, as long as he is acting under orders. Why should Samuel Lee take the misfortunes of the American patriots so much to heart? Was it merely that he had thought the matter out, and had been brought to his present frame of mind through the light of cold reasoning? It was not that altogether. Truth compels us to say that Lee had a very personal interest in the American cause; he loved a fair rebel. Her name was Polly Piper. It was euphonious enough to suggest the title of some bouncing song—and its pretty bearer was the daughter

## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

of a Boston patriot. As she set forth the wrongs of the colonists, her expressive, pensive face would flush with an anger that greatly enhanced her charms (for she was usually pale), and Samuel Lee, British soldier though he was, could not, and would not say her nay. He was fast becoming a friend to America, or something more than a friend to a certain young American.

A man is not so skilful in concealing his feelings as is a woman. Ere long Lee's fellow-soldiers found out that Cupid had been busy with one of their number. They began to tease the lover unmercifully. Had the latter been in love with a Tory the teasing would have been only of the good-natured kind; but it became more or less malicious from the fact that the girl in the case chanced to be a patriot. The soldiers jeered at him, and they placarded the door of his barracks with a conspicuous sign which read:

CAUGHT IN PROVINCIAL MESHES.

We may fancy, too, that Lee had to stand many a declaration to the effect that he was a "blawsted rebel," a

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“chicken-hearted provincial” or something equally criminal. Yet he went on serving his King, whilst the political crisis drew nearer and nearer. After being detained some days by extra duties in camp, Lee stole out from his quarters, “and made haste to the street and door where he had last seen the object of his growing affections. To his surprise, all evidence of life had departed; the shutters were closed, the doors barred, and no light flickered from any window. His shrill whistle only brought an answering echo from the shed in the rear. He turned sorrowfully away, revolving in his mind the thought, could it be that this family had been driven to such a state of desperation as to leave their home and go into a country town, as so many had done?”<sup>1</sup>

How Lee railed at unkind fate, as he looked at the deserted house, and regretted that he had never told Polly of his love. In those discussions with her concerning the rights and wrongs of the provincials, why had he never revealed his heart to her? Why had he not told her that he sympathized with the Americans, British soldier though he was? It was too late now. Miss Lee and her family had disappeared as completely as if they had been transported to another planet, and it seemed as if no amount of inquiries in their old neighborhood could throw any light on their present whereabouts. When some one told him that the Pipers had “gone to Concord,” Lee was made incredulous by the very promptness

<sup>1</sup> *Beneath Old Roof Trees*, by Abram English Brown.



## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

of the reply. He believed that it was only designed to deceive him. "They regard me as an enemy to their country, these Americans," he thought bitterly, "and would throw me off the track." So he stalked back to his barracks, as disconsolate a lover as ever existed. "Those bright eyes were before him wherever he went. When on the duty of a guard at night he fancied their tearful presence." In fine, our Samuel was frightfully "love-sick"; the life of a soldier lost all charm for him. How can a man thirst to fight the enemy when he has already surrendered to the charms of a daughter of the enemy? And when he believes, as well, in the political principles of the enemy? This was why Lee groaned in spirit, whilst his comrades continued to laugh at him and to cry that Sam was held prisoner by a Boston maiden.

Thus winter passed into spring. Nature seemed in her most genial mood; nothing about her presaged the coming storm. But General Gage received information in April that a quantity of powder and other ammunition had been stored at Concord village by the desperate provincials. He determined to secure this ammunition; and from this determination came the night march of the regulars from Boston and the engagements at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, when the curtain rose on the first act of the drama of the Revolution.

Among the men who were ordered to march to Concord was the forlorn Lee. He must have lacked the enthusiasm of his companions, who, only too delighted

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

to get away from their stupid barracks, and quite sure that there was no danger to apprehend from the country-people, felt like boys about to be released from school. When they heard that they were to seize the stores and ammunition in the little Massachusetts village they joked, in their ignorance, about the ease of their mission. "The name of the place should be *Conquered*," they laughed. To Lee the name of the place suggested Polly Piper. Perhaps, after all, the person who told him that the Pipers had gone to Concord might have spoken truth. His heart bounded at the thought. But it was not a pleasant thought. *She* might be there, and he was marching to the village as an enemy.

Who has not heard the story of that memorable march? At Lexington there was some shedding of patriot blood. Then and there began the Revolution. Yet the regulars and their officers looked upon the episode as the cupping of some over-blooded rustics—and so marched on to Concord. It was about nine o'clock in the morning that there came the clash at Old North Bridge when the British received their first repulse.

The first of the minutemen to be in readiness for the coming of the British were those in the company of Captain Isaac Davis, of Acton, that brave, god-fearing, sedate Puritan. As his men were arranging their guns, preparatory to marching, they laughed and talked, much as the regulars had laughed and talked in Boston a few

## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

hours before. They were only too anxious for a brush with the red-coats. But Davis, man of iron, rebuked them for what he held to be their levity. "'Tis a most eventful crisis for the colonies," he said. "Blood will be spilled; that's certain. Let every man gird himself for battle, and be not afraid, for God is on our side!" So the company became serious and silently marched away from the Captain's house. Suddenly he called a halt. Then he ran back to his home to take a last look at his wife and four children. He had a presentiment that he would be dead ere nightfall. He stood on the threshold, tearless, but with a lump in his throat. "Take good care of the children," he said, and so turned away. In another minute he had rejoined his men. With a mighty effort he forgot the father; again he was the soldier. Later on Davis was bringing his company into position on the highlands at North Bridge, taking the extreme left of the line of provincials who had been hastily summoned to resist the British. Then Colonel Barrett held a council of war. There were, perhaps, six hundred patriots assembled here under arms. Not so far away, on yonder hills, could be seen the gorgeously-clad forms of Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn, of the British regulars. While the American officers were at their council, trying to determine what to do, they saw smoke and flame rising from Concord.

"They have set the village on fire," cried one of the patriots; "will you let them burn it down?" Colonel

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Barrett and his officers resolved to cross the bridge, march into the town, and engage the regulars who were now there. "I haven't a man that's afraid to go," cried Captain Davis. It was true; not one soul among all those men of Middlesex was afraid to go.

Then Colonel Barrett gave the order to march to the bridge, and the minutemen began to move, deliberately, bravely. Some of the British were scattered about on the west side of the bridge, along the Concord River. Mingled with the music of "The White Cockade," played by young American fifiers, came the booming of British guns. Then there whistled by a volley from the invaders, and Captain Davis fell, never to rise again. His presentiment had been verified.

"Fire, fellow soldiers! For God's sake, fire!" shouted one of the colonial officers, Major Buttrick, as he discharged his own musket. The command echoed along the line. The fire was returned. In the end the British, after being joined by the regulars from Concord, had broken ranks and started back to Boston in ignominious retreat. The Revolution had begun.

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard round the world.

"The foe long since in silence slept;  
Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;  
And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps."

## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

But where was our friend, the love-lorn Samuel Lee, throughout this trying time? When the British regulars first marched into Concord, and began their work of destruction, he found himself without heart for the task. He was so much without heart, indeed, that one of his fellow-soldiers cried sharply: "Why, Sam, there's no life in you! What's the matter?" Lee might have replied that he found no joy in fighting on the wrong side, but he wisely held his tongue. Had he been fighting the French he would have proved, no doubt, as brave as a lion; but to wage war against one's own kinsmen, especially when one of those kinsmen might be a relative of Polly Piper's, was quite another thing! When he reached the historic bridge, as Mr. Brown tells us, he "had no death-dealing shot for the yeomen." Neither did he fire on the return to Concord. As he ran past the meeting-house, however, he was hit by a bullet from an American's musket, and fell to the ground badly wounded.

Some good Samaritans, in the shape of villagers, tenderly came to the assistance of the stricken regular. They lifted him from the roadway and bore him to the house of Dr. Minot, the Concord surgeon. The room in which he was placed presented an appearance of ghastly activity. Other stricken men, with blood flowing from their wounds, were stretched out upon the floor, while the Doctor and his friends were rendering what services they could. Among these friends was a pretty, pale-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

faced but resolute girl who went about her ministrations with the air of a heroine. She was of the stuff of which many American maidens are made; patient, unflinching, and ready for any emergency. At last she came to the almost unconscious Lee. His eyes were closed; it seemed as if he were about to die. Yet the girl leaned over him, unshrinkingly, and began to dress his wounds. Surely she must have started as she gazed into his powder-grimed face. For she was Polly Piper.

She went on, however, attending to the soldier. He still had his eyes closed, as if he would never open them again. Then Dr. Minot came to her. "Mary," he said, giving her some directions. Lee opened his eyes. There, before him, was Polly Piper! From that moment life, which but a second before had seemed to be ebbing away, struggled for the mastery. The lover resolved, perhaps unconsciously, to get well; he had something to live for.

The spring days passed on. Already the colonies were aflame over the news from Concord, and King George would soon be startled to hear that some untrained provincials had dared to fire on his troops. Nature smiled more and more; the sun grew more genial; the bluebirds chirped so merrily that it was hard to understand how war could stalk in the land. Lee was lying under a colonial roof. The kind Doctor was amazed that the soldier should be growing better instead

## B O R N   T O   B E   A   R E B E L

---

of worse, for the wound had promised to be fatal. "You'll live, Lee!" he said at last.

Lee looked at Minot with a curious expression on his face. "I'll not live to go back to the British army, to fight against such friends," he answered. During the weary hours of his illness (if hours could be weary whilst Miss Piper was attending him) he had made one great decision. Never more would he bear arms against a people whom he believed to be in the right. Far better to stay with them, and to take up their burdens, if he might. A few days later the Doctor said: "You must have been in a very healthy condition when the Yankee bullet struck you." For the continued improvement of the soldier surprised him more and more. Then Lee gave the key to the situation. "My mind has been more fully at rest since I opened my eyes and saw Mary here," he said, "than for many weeks before we were ordered to march out of Boston!" Now the Doctor understood all. He began to think that it was Cupid rather than Æsculapius who had worked this wonderful cure. And what of Mary? She had found, as the days went on, how very pleasant it was to know that Samuel Lee was safe in Concord, as an invalid, rather than safe in Boston as a well man. Her face lost its paleness; love had entered her heart.

At last Lee was once more on his feet. Some one came to him to say that, as an exchange of prisoners was in order, he might return to the British troops in Boston,

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

if he so chose. But he did not so choose. Never again, he vowed, would he serve George III. Thus spring passed into summer, and summer into winter. Then Lee asked Polly Piper the question of all questions, and she said "Yes." Then they were quietly married—she an American by birth, he one by conviction. Children came to them, and the Lees were a happy family indeed. It was in 1790 that Samuel Lee died. For him, at least, the romance of life was over. He had lived long enough to see the cause of America triumphant, and to show his loyalty to such a cause. He lies buried in Concord town. Some of his descendants still live in Massachusetts to tell of the man who came to this country to fight the Americans and ended by marrying one of them. He died before his father, and never obtained the forgiveness of the latter for his defection from the Royal standard. We can imagine the old English squire fuming and blustering when he heard that Samuel had lost his heart among the "rebels." To the worthy gentleman this was worse than death. It was dishonor.







EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---







## VIII

### EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

CITIZENS of New Orleans who made a habit of walking the quaint streets of that gay town, with its suggestion of flowers and Creole life, as far back as the spring of 1824, often must have seen, sauntering along in earnest converse, a curiously contrasted pair. The elder of the two was a man of perhaps thirty-five years of age, sinewy and not ill-featured, but with the air of a genteel desperado who would not hesitate to cut your throat if actually put to such an unpleasant necessity. The younger man was a mere boy, not more than eighteen or nineteen, whose great shock of black hair effectively set off a face which if not over-refined or spiritual, or free from sensuality, was undeniably handsome and engaging. The youth always regarded his friend with a look in which deference, comradeship and, withal, a certain air of independence had a striking combination. It was plain that he was being initiated by the elder man into the mysteries of New Orleans life. And there were plenty of mysteries, too, in a town which had so many elements, so many types of mankind—French, American, Spanish, aristocratic,

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

plebeian, high and low. New Orleans was then, as it is now, one of the most cosmopolitan places in the New World.

The youth was an obscure actor by the name of Edwin Forrest. He was born in Philadelphia, and had been engaged, ever since he was old enough to know the value of a dollar, in a rough-and-tumble struggle with poverty. At thirteen he was working in a ship-chandler's shop in the Quaker city, while his mother was keeping a tiny millinery store on Cedar (now South) Street. But there was more in him than the spirit of a ship-chandler. He longed for the stage and its elusive honors. Once he appeared as a girl at the old "South," (the theatre wherein John André had acted), in a sensational melodrama entitled *The Robbers of Calabria*, but his dress was so short that the heavy shoes and unfeminine woolen stockings of the fair maiden were ludicrously in evidence. "Look at the legs and feet!" cried a boy in the pit—and the curtain was rung down amid an uproar of merriment. Young Forrest was sent home in disgrace by the manager of the theatre. He solaced himself by waylaying in the street that critical boy from the pit, and treating him to a good thrashing. Later he was traveling through the West as a "barn-stormer," doing all sorts of theatrical work, from *Richard III* to a negro-minstrel part. Then he joined a circus company, in which he displayed a remarkable talent for turning somersaults. But he soon hastened back to the boards of a theatre, and was



## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

now, in this spring of 1824, playing "leading juveniles" at the American Theatre, in Camp Street, near Gravier, New Orleans. Such were the humble beginnings of one who was to be known, ere long, as "The Great American Tragedian."

Master Forrest's friend, the man with the air of a genteel desperado, happened to be the famous Colonel James Bowie. His name has gone down to posterity as the inventor of the effective "Bowie knife." Mr. Bowie, whose father was a prosperous Louisiana planter of good family, had been educated in a Jesuit college. But it does not appear that he imbibed much religious impulse from contact with the Jesuit fathers. On the contrary, he developed into a fighter, at once reckless, fearless and dashing, and became, as it were, the embodiment of the wildest element of Southern life.

To the modern reader his career is scarcely known. Yet it reads like an act from a border melodrama. Take, for instance, his once-celebrated duel with Norris Wright. The challenge came from Wright. Bowie resolved to use a knife which he had caused to be made for just such a contingency. He had taken a file fourteen inches long, of the kind employed to sharpen saws; he had carefully ground off the file marks, and reduced the small piece of steel, by means of the grindstone, until it was about the weight and thickness he desired. Then he took it to "Pedro," a skilled Spanish cutler, who had learned to forge sword blades in Toledo. "Pedro," after tempering

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

and finishing the knife, fitted it with a cross-piece and haft. "Now," cried Bowie enthusiastically, as he surveyed the result of his own ingenuity, and the Spaniard's handicraft, "I have something fit to fight for a man's life with!" It was, indeed, a formidable weapon. "Pedro" had hollow-ground it like a razor, with a double edge for three or four inches from the point. It was fitted with a wooden scabbard, covered with leather, and was "sharp enough to shave the hair off the back of one's hand." This constituted the original "Bowie knife," which afterwards underwent some modifications before it became a plaything for the general public.

Colonel Bowie now felt secure. On the night preceding the duel he slept the sleep of a man who is at peace with the world; in the morning he arose with the gayety of the proverbial lark, and ate—as Louisiana history solemnly chronicles—a hearty breakfast. An hour or two later Bowie and Norris Wright were confronting each other, in the presence of some interested spectators, on Natchez Island, in the Mississippi River. The island was a favorite haunt for Southern gentlemen who had little difficulties to settle without the interference of the police authorities. The fight began, quite cheerfully, with pistols. One of Bowie's weapons missed fire, but both of Wright's bullets took effect upon his antagonist. The Colonel was seriously wounded. Yet he kept his ground with the courage of a lion. The spectators held their breath, and stirred uneasily. "Would he be able to

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

stand the ordeal much longer?" they asked themselves, tremulously.

Wright, a formidable adversary, and lithe as a panther, eyed the Colonel with the air of an animal who is about to spring upon his prey. And spring he did upon the wounded man, despite all the rules of fairest warfare. "Bowie's done for now," thought the friends of Wright.

Bowie, however, was not "done for," by any means. He took a step backward, pulled from a pocket his deadly knife, and raised it on high, as its cruel blade flashed in the warm morning sun. At once three of Wright's friends drew their revolvers. Two of them fired—too late, however, to save their own champion. Bowie had made one ghastly cut at Wright's neck. The keen steel did its work only too well. Norris Wright, already dead, fell to the ground.

Bowie himself was so badly riddled with bullets that his life was despaired of for some weeks. But he recovered, and distinguished himself in another year by dispatching from this world, by means of the same knife, a certain General Crain. "My knife never misses fire!" he remarked to one of his chums.

Of such mettle was James Bowie, and amid such curious surroundings, at once luxurious yet semi-barbarous, did he live. His career had a tragic but characteristic termination some years after his intimacy with Edwin Forrest. In 1835 he sold his estates in Louisiana and went to Texas. The "Lone Star" State was in a

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

condition of bloody revolution. The sturdy resistance of the Texans against Mexican rule so exasperated General Santa Ana, whose forces were trying to crush them, that he vowed he would take no more prisoners, or give no more quarter. Thereupon Bowie, only too glad to court danger and adventure, offered his services to the young Republic, and was at once made a Colonel of riflemen in the Texan army. In January of 1836, he was ordered to San Antonio de Bexar to assist in holding that place against the troops of Santa Ana. When March came, the half-starving garrison surrendered. Then ensued a general massacre which must forever leave a dark stain upon the memory of Santa Ana. Among those treacherously murdered, after the Mexicans had entered the fortifications, were Colonels Bowie and Crockett. Bowie, who had been badly wounded three times during the siege, but who had bitterly opposed the surrender, was lying on his bed when he heard the triumphant Mexicans coming in. "We have surrendered!" he muttered. It was the first hint he had been vouchsafed that San Antonio de Bexar had actually been delivered up to the enemy. The tramp, tramp, tramp of the feet was to him an ominous sound. He knew that his life was ended; he knew that he, of all persons, would be allowed no quarter. Already some of the Mexicans were rushing into his room. In another minute they were shooting at him, like cowards. But Bowie was not the man to die without a struggle. Jumping from his bed,

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

despite his wounds, he leaped among the invaders with the glare of an enraged tiger, as he began to slash at them with a knife. There was the old time skill in the use of that "Bowie." When the firing ended "six of the enemy had crossed the Styx with James Bowie, and gone with him to the shades."

With such a man as Colonel Bowie for a boon companion it was not to be wondered at that young Forrest should look upon duels with a lenient, not to say admiring eye. Furthermore, there was hot, rebellious blood flowing through the veins of the stripling actor. His father had been a Scotchman who once peddled through the Northern states, afterwards becoming an humble clerk in the Philadelphia bank of Stephen Girard; his mother was a plucky woman of lower-class German parentage, and he himself had been almost a gamin in the streets of the Quaker city. Gifted with an independent spirit, yet keenly feeling his social disadvantages, it is not strange that Edwin soon cultivated a sort of jealousy and an affectation of contempt for the conventionalities of the polite world. He chose, foolishly enough, to call those conventionalities "sham and hypocrisy." Thus it happened that when he made a stir in New Orleans, by the youthful fire of his acting, he refused the olive-branch held out to him by the aristocratic Creoles of the town. He would have nothing to do with the upper *strata* of Southern society; he rather decided to cast in his lot with horse-racers, gamblers, and gentlemen of a sporting pro-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

clivity. He even went so far in his desire to be unconventional as to become very intimate with Push-ma-taha, a Choctaw chieftain who occasionally graced New Orleans with his manly presence. "What a contrast he is," cried Forrest, speaking of the Indian, "to some fashionable men, half made up of false teeth, false hair, padding, gloves, and spectacles."

Yet much as Edwin Forrest might philosophize about "fashion," and other things, he was no more a philosopher than was *Romeo*, when it came to a love affair. Perhaps, if he had possessed a little more of the despised conventionality, it would have been better for his peace of mind when he chanced to fall desperately in love with Jane Placide. Miss Placide was the leading lady of the American Theatre, where Forrest was acting. She was, furthermore, one of the most beautiful actresses of her day. She might be a year or two older than the budding tragedian, but what mattered that to him? We all know that callow youths are prone to lose their hearts over women who are slightly their elders. And Jane Placide could well inspire even a younger swain with the tender passion. Her face had in it not only the beauty which comes from regularity of feature and a pure complexion; but, far more than that, it possessed what the poet is apt to describe by the indefinite term of "soulfulness." As she was of Southern birth, so also had she that softness, and refinement, and sentiment of expression which one sees so often in the features of those who are born south

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

of Mason and Dixon's line. There was something pleasantly emotional in her countenance; it suggested a feeling which is not to be observed in the Junoesque type of woman. When to all this attractiveness was added a vivacity more characteristic of the Northern belle than of the Southern damsel, it may be imagined that Jane Placide was entitled to the high place which she soon occupied in the hearts of the New Orleans public, both masculine and feminine. Her acting, too, was natural, as befitted the granddaughter of an English artiste who had been a favorite at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. She had a talent for investing herself with the spirit of any part assigned to her, were it grave or gay. She could give dashing comedy sparkle to *Violante* in *The Wonder*, or put fire into the turgid lines of some worn-out, classic tragedy.

But it was not until Edwin Forrest had spent some time in the Southern metropolis that he showed his love for Miss Placide. In the meanwhile, the youth made rapid strides in the esteem of local theatre-goers, kept to his intimacy with Push-ma-ta-ha, and at last incurred the professional jealousy of his manager, James H. Caldwell. Now it happened that Caldwell, who considered himself to be a very good actor, had not calculated on the sudden success of his handsome *protégé* from Philadelphia. He was a man of the world, a *bon viveur*, and a shrewd business gentleman; but he was no more able to resist the "green-eyed monster" than were less adroit speci-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

mens of mankind. When the gay play-lovers of New Orleans began to rave about the fine looks, the grace and the wonderful voice of young Forrest, the manager who had engaged him, and had sounded the Philadelphian's trumpet for him in advance, began to grow angry. "I did not bring this Yankee down here to supersede me," he thought, not without the bitterness of one who sees the pupil outdistancing the master. Thereupon, suiting the action to his jealousy, he reserved all the heroic parts in the plays for himself, and assigned to Forrest most of the old men's rôles. This was, of course, a covert insult. To be refused the impersonation of romantic characters, where good looks and fervor are desired, and to be relegated to the parts of feeble septuagenarians, is naturally a great shock to high ambition. But Forrest, who had more self-control than in later years, bore the ordeal manfully. He played the old men,—played them admirably too—and made no sign. He was even discreet enough to accompany Caldwell on a trip to Virginia in the autumn of 1824, and play with him in Richmond and other cities.

It was on this expedition that Forrest had an amusing sight of that great yet simple-hearted man, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States, and author of the famous "Life of Washington." The Chief Justice was stopping at the same country inn in which Forrest chanced to be quartered for the day. The landlady, a corpulent female who, like *Hamlet*, was "scant of



## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

breath," came out into the old-fashioned courtyard to catch an unsuspecting hen to roast for the dinner of the distinguished jurist. The hen, however, proved hardly as unsuspecting as might have been imagined, for she had the effrontery to run away from the landlady. The latter's breath was soon spent; she waddled here, there, everywhere, without succeeding in trapping the wary fowl. The Thespian and the Chief Justice looked on the scene with almost tragic interest. At last John Marshall could stand the strain no longer. Running bareheaded into the courtyard, his silver shoe-buckles shining in the sun, and his close body-coat and tight breeches revealing his almost scrawny form, he began to clap his hands and cry "Shoo! Shoo!" as he chased the hen from one point to another. It is gravely recorded that the fowl who had eluded the fat landlady was no match against the wiles, or the imprisoning-power of the lawyer. He and Forrest dined on chicken that day.

When the young actor returned to New Orleans, to re-appear at the American Theatre late in the winter of 1824-5, Jane Placide was again there as leading lady. He promptly "fell down and prostrated himself before her shrine." Forrest was, indeed, at a most impressionable age, and had already been taking an innocent fling at the muse of Poetry, albeit in pretty bad verse. For when a certain "Miss S" left town he promptly sat down and wrote:

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“ Ah, go not hence, light of my saddened soul !  
Nor leave me in thy absence to lament ;  
Thy going sheds dark chaos o'er the whole,  
A noonday night from heaven sent.”

But the affections of Edwin for the “ Miss S” who so cruelly departed was only Platonic, after all. It is very easy to write love verses without losing one's heart into the bargain. There is a more passionate ring, although hardly more scholarship, in some mysterious lines beginning:

“ To \_\_\_\_\_

“ Thy spell, O Love, is Elysium to my soul.  
Freely I yield me to thy sweet control ;  
For other joys let Folly's fools contend  
Whether to pomp or luxury they tend.”

We are quite safe in filling up the blank space after the preposition “ To ” with the magic name of Jane Placide. Once that Forrest was back again at the American Theatre, acting in the same company with this charming Southern girl, he forgot “ Miss S,” or any other passing fancy as quickly as *Romeo* forgot *Rosaline* when he first looked upon the face of *Juliet*.

Yet what misery there was in that boyish love of his! Caldwell, the Envious, was himself in love with the leading woman. The youth set his teeth together as he thought of the advantage which the manager enjoyed in such a suit. He, Edwin, was but the employee of Caldwell, and, worse than that, was often condemned to play

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

old men's parts, while the manager could impersonate any theatrical hero he chose, and make most tender stage-love to the lady. It takes a stoic to look with equanimity on a rival who possesses so favorable a field.

Now the stoicism of a young fellow who is worth anything cannot go so far as to keep him cool under such an ordeal. No wonder that Forrest clenched his hands when he saw Caldwell come before the footlights in the guise of an *Orlando* or a *Don Felix* and say pretty things to a gentle *Rosalind* or a sprightly *Violante*. He began to scowl angrily at his manager; he threw diplomacy to the winds; he plainly showed Mr. Caldwell that he considered him to be a very impertinent fellow. The latter only laughed, like the cynical man of the world that he was, and regarded poor Forrest with contemptuous disdain.

What, it may be asked, was Jane Placide doing all this time to encourage either of the swains? Practically nothing, unless it might be to look very bewitching both on and off the stage, and to play heroines with a tenderness and sweetness that made all the members of her audiences, masculine and feminine alike, her warmest admirers. She was more in love with her art than with any man; she liked the romance of the boards better than the romance of real life; yet none seemed better qualified than she to grace the latter. One always felt a desire to quote poetry when Miss Placide was mentioned; she suggested to the imaginative spectator the dainty lines from *Twelfth Night*:

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

“ 'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white  
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on :  
Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive  
If you will lead these graces to the grave  
And leave the world no copy.”

Soon, despite the placidity of Jane Placide, Edwin Forrest's wrath at his rival could no longer be kept in bounds. From scowls and innuendoes, the young actor proceeded to high words. But how provokingly cool Caldwell insisted on remaining. How he took delight in treating Edwin as a foolish boy!

At last Forrest, stung to the quick by this exasperating levity, sent a fiery challenge to Caldwell. The trouble between them should be settled by a recourse to arms! The energetic Colonel Bowie was, we may be quite sure, taken into the confidence of the challenger, and we can imagine how the fearless Louisianian gave his *protégé* many valuable hints for the coming duel. The coming duel, forsooth! There was to be no duel! That provoking Caldwell actually was merry when he received the challenge. He made some good-natured remarks to the effect that Forrest was too young to fight, and then—yes, he had the hardihood to laugh!

Forrest was thunderstruck. Was he always to be treated like a silly schoolboy? The thought was unbearable. His vanity, of which he had a great deal, was wounded to the quick. So he wrote off the following card, in his nervous, legible hand:

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

"Whereas James H. Caldwell has wronged and insulted me, and refused me the satisfaction of a gentleman, I hereby denounce him as a scoundrel and post him as a coward.

"EDWIN FORREST,"

This bellicose announcement the young man copied several times, and posted the cards in public places. "At last," he thought, "Caldwell will be angry." And with that comfortable reflection he hurried off to the country to spend a few weeks in the wigwams and hunting grounds of Push-ma-ta-ha, the Choctaw chieftain. After all, thought the would-be duellist, what was civilized life to the freedom of the woods—particularly when the object of one's romantic affections remained so impassive? So he watched the life of the Indians, learned a few words of Choctaw, and admired the wild charms of Push-ma-ta-ha. This superb savage should have been preserved for posterity in the enthusiastic stories of a Cooper, for he is described to us as "graceful and sinewy as a stag, with eyes of piercing brilliancy, a voice of guttural music like gurgling waters," and with movements "as easy and darting as those of a squirrel." His skin, "mantled with blood," was of the "color of ruddy gold."<sup>1</sup>

When Caldwell read the grandiose placard written by Forrest he was unfeeling enough to indulge in another laugh. Some one told him that the actor had gone away to visit Push-ma-ta-ha. "Humph!" said the

<sup>1</sup> Alger's *Life of Forrest*.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

astute manager, "the boy is like the Parthian. He wounds me as he flies." This shows that Caldwell knew something of classic history, and, far more important, that he also knew how to turn the whole episode into ridicule. It was incumbent on him, as a man of honor, to treat the stormings of Forrest either seriously, or as the idle vaporings of a lad. He chose the latter course, and perhaps thereby saved the young Philadelphian from death at the point of a pistol. In after years Forrest himself could look back to this early trouble with amusement, and thank the manager, in that rugged, gnarled heart of his, that there had come no answer to the challenge.

But who dare say that Edwin Forrest ever forgot Jane Placide? Indeed, he never did quite forget this, the first love of his youth. After he had hunted for a time with Push-ma-ta-ha, smoked many a pipe of peace, and duly admired the charms which all the Choctaws possessed over the more civilized whites, he traveled northward and began slowly to climb the ladder at whose top round he encountered fame and material prosperity. As month succeeded month the "wound of unrequited love" slowly healed. Yet, unto the very end of his turbulent career, he recalled with regret the girl who had made New Orleans seem to him a chosen-land of youthful romance. If we follow that career in latter life, and read of the dark days when he separated from Catharine Sinclair, his beautiful English wife, we find it

## EDWIN FORREST'S FIRST LOVE

---

pleasant to turn back, for a change of atmosphere, to this earlier page in his history. Had Jane Placide smiled upon him, and joined her fate to his, and had she lived years longer than she did, he might have proved a finer man. The rough corners of his character might have been polished into roundness. As it was, however, Edwin Forrest stands before us as one who, in spite of all his talents and successes, went down to his grave a disappointed spirit. Marriage with Catharine Sinclair was a ghastly failure, both for him and for her. They even took their woes into court, and the spectacle was a sad one for all but scandal-mongers.

Jane Placide seems to have taken the trouble between Caldwell and the actor with the calmness of a woman who cared for neither of the rivals. She was always thinking of her art; she wanted to achieve greatness, as Anne Oldfield and Peg Woffington had achieved it in other days. She recalled the early trials of Siddons. Ill-health, however, unrelentingly dogged her footsteps. She went on slaving at her profession, charming all audiences by the sweetness which had entangled the heart of Forrest, until death stepped in and claimed her. She died in 1835, and is buried in a New Orleans graveyard. On a stone above her grace is the inscription:

“There’s not an hour  
Of day or dreamy night but I am with thee ;  
There’s not a wind that whispers o’er thy name,  
And not a flower that sleeps beneath the moon  
But in its lines of fragrance tells a tale of thee.”

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Forrest was traveling through Europe when he heard of her death. "And so Jane Placide is dead," he wrote in his diary. "Her disposition was as lovely as her person. Heaven lodge and rest her fair soul." It was a tender, graceful entry; it showed that all the bitterness of disappointed love had departed. Far better than such bitterness was the sweet recollection of a woman who had been all loveliness.

Jane Placide is forgotten, save by some stranger who may stumble across her grave and read the legend thereon in the light of the warm Southern sunshine. There is pathetic irony in that inscription now. No one thinks of her either by "day or dreamy night." Edwin Forrest, the last of his family, sleeps in quaint St. Paul's churchyard, in Third Street below Walnut, in the oldest quarter of Philadelphia. To the present generation he is only a name, a shadow. Thus have passed away two players who once swayed the emotions of thousands of theatre-goers.







AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---







## IX

### AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

**I**F one would see how often the history of Great Britain is strangely connected with that of America, let him turn to the career of that picturesque heroine, Flora MacDonald. She proved to be a born Tory, did this Scottish woman who fairly bristled with belief in the "divine right" of Kings and other archaic illusions. Furthermore, she looked upon the patriots of the American Revolution as rebels who deserved hanging. Yet, despite all her sins, we pardon her, as we always pardon the possessors of bravery and beauty. Surely we have so far forgotten the bitterness of the War for Independence, in the lapse of a century and a quarter, that we can look with kindness on one who risked much, and gained little, in the cause of Royalty.

Flora MacDonald had a sense of chivalry which would have done honor even to a man—and man is supposed to have the monopoly of that dangerous quality. She felt sorry for the distress of a fellow-being; she was loyal to the ambitious prince whom so many of her countrymen looked upon, not unnaturally, as their rightful King, and (what is no less potent in the inner recesses of a woman's

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

heart) she was not insensible to the attractions of a young and handsome adventurer.

Young, handsome, and likewise a reckless adventurer, undeniably was Prince Charles Edward, grandson of King James II, who came over from France in 1745 to plant on Scotch soil the standard of the royal house of Stuart. What a flood of romance, by the way, did the name of Stuart suggest in the old days, and what a host of enthusiasts did it attract to its hopeless cause! Pedantic James I, the two Charleses and the bigotted, narrow-minded James II, made four of the poorest Kings that England ever groaned under, yet they had the saving grace, if such it may be called, of always winning for themselves and for their family legions of devoted, honest adherents. It only goes to show that men may be deceivers, inconstant, unscrupulous, yet if they represent a popular principle they never lack friends, either in prosperity or adversity. In this case the principle was that the sovereigns of Great Britain and Ireland ruled by "divine right," rather than by act of Parliament.

It was this "divine right" fetich that kept many a Scotchman and not a few Englishmen staunch Jacobites long after the house of Hanover had been firmly seated on the British throne. William and Mary succeeded shortsighted James II; then came Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart sovereigns, to be followed by King George I and King George II, of Hanover; yet, despite the lapse of time, thousands of hearts still beat true to the Old



## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

Chevalier (he who called himself James III), and to the Young Pretender.

So when the latter, otherwise "Bonnie Prince Charlie," arrived in Scotland, to seize, if he could, the birthright of his ancestors, there was a mighty uprising among the Scottish clans. But we all know how, in the end, the enthusiasm of the Highlanders and the plottings of the English Jacobites, some of whom were intriguing under the very nose of phlegmatic King George II, came to naught. The battle of Culloden, in which the Highlanders were so disastrously defeated, put an end forever to the Stuart dynasty.

Although the dream of victory had vanished, there yet remained one reality. Charles Edward, the head and front of the rebellion, was still at large in Scotland, while the relentless English government was straining every nerve to get hold of the young man, intending to send him, after due process of law, to a place where he could no longer trouble the peace or sleep of King George II. When the government had crushed an enemy irretrievably it liked to complete the work by getting well rid of him. If the Prince were captured his head would surely pay the forfeit; it was the fortune of war.

During his struggles to elude the Hanoverian soldiers Charles Edward became a desolate wanderer upon the Long Island of the Hebrides. He lacked the actual necessities of life, yet he was as cheerful as if he were sitting on the throne of his ancestors. The net was being drawn

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

around him so closely that escape to France seemed almost impossible. At this critical moment Captain O'Neil, his Irish companion and *Fidus Achates*, met Flora MacDonald at the house of her kinsman, Lord Clanranald. Flora was the young daughter of a deceased laird of the island of South Uist, and had but recently returned to the Hebrides from Edinburgh, where she had been completing her education. She was beautiful to look upon, with her regular features, superb large eyes, waving dark hair, and an expression that denoted both enthusiasm and resolution. Her voice was sweet and low, and the harsher accents of the Scottish tongue were not to be heard in her speech. Captain O'Neil explained to her that the Prince must be gotten out of the Hebrides secretly, and he first proposed that she should guide His Royal Highness (who was to be disguised as a maid-servant) to the island of Skye.

Miss MacDonald considered the idea "too fantastical" to be practicable. "A MacDonald, a Macleod, and a Campbell militia are in South Uist in quest of the Prince," she said; "a guard is posted at every ferry; no person can leave Long Island without a passport, and the channel between Uist and Skye is covered with ships of war." But when, later, she was taken to the Prince, her heart was touched; her prudence vanished; she resolved to save him if she could. "Charles was exhausted with fatigue and misery; he had become thin and weak, and his health was greatly affected by the hardships which he

## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

had undergone. He and O'Neil had lost, indeed, the means of personal comfort; they had but two shirts with them, and every article of wearing apparel was worn out. To a feeble mind the depressed state of Prince Charles's affairs, his broken down aspect, and the dangers which surrounded him, would have inspired reluctance to serve one so desolate. These circumstances, however, only softened the resistance which Flora had at first made to the scheme suggested for his escape, and renewed her desire to aid him."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it was that Flora set out from the island of Benbecula for Skye on an evening in June of 1746, having with her in the open boat six oarsmen, a servant, and the Prince, who was disguised as Betsey Burke, "an Irish spinning maid." So read the passport which she had cleverly obtained from her stepfather, Captain Hugh MacDonald, who was in charge of the militia in the vicinity. "Betsey's" clothes, which had been provided by Lady Clanranald, comprised a flowered linen gown, a quilted petticoat, and a mantle of clean camlet, made with a hood, after the Irish fashion. No one had been merrier than the Prince when he had put on the costume: he could see humor even amid danger.

Hardly had the party pulled away from the island before a great storm broke over their unprotected heads. It seemed as if Nature, like the God of War, was determined to present a frowning face to poor Charles

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of The Jacobites.*

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Edward. The thunder was deafening; the waves, resembling liquid mountains, tossed the little boat about as if it were a straw; the lightning flashed brilliantly, and lighted up the pale but undaunted faces of the voyagers. The more the thunder pealed and the lightning played across the gloomy sky the more did Flora MacDonald cry to the rowers to take courage, and keep at their work. The firm tones of her voice, and the calm, undismayed bearing of the Prince inspired them to stay at the oars, as the tiny craft would sink down into the trough of the waters to rise again, the next moment, on the crest of another wave.

Suddenly a voice, resolute and melodious, burst into a wild Highland chant. It was the Prince, who now began to sing the Scottish songs which he had learned during his recent campaign, and who took this way of infusing into the rowers his own fearlessness. Night, seeming all the blacker by the contrast of the lightning, now enveloped the scene. Still the pleasant voice of Charles Edward could be heard, either singing Highland music or telling stories and legends of the long-ago. He was young, handsome, attractive, (characteristics which his disguise could not conceal) nor was it hard to explain, from the presence of mind and the bravery which he showed at this critical juncture, why he had found so many idolaters among the clansmen of Scotland. And then his courtly manners towards Flora! He might have been sitting next to her in the Palace of Holyrood, for

## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

not once did he relax his winning grace and air of breeding. No wonder that she already felt for him the chivalrous devotion of a subject for a beloved sovereign.

At last the dawn came. The weary mariners were near the island of Skye. Here would be temporary refuge. But wait! What is that? A band of men upon the shore? They are soldiers!

The boat is turned away from the land which looked so inviting only a minute before. Just in time, too, for a shower of bullets whizzes around the occupants. The soldiers have fired from the shore. The rowers now send their craft along in an easterly direction. In a few hours they have made what they hope will prove a safer landing. The Prince is concealed under a hollow rock upon a dreary beach not far from the house of a certain Sir Alexander MacDonald, Laird of Sleite. Yet the Laird is a friend to the House of Hanover, and has no wish to see Charles Edward on the throne of his ancestors. How, therefore, will Flora MacDonald save the young adventurer?

Some women would not have saved him. But Flora is made of different stuff from them. She has mother-wit, and she understands human nature. Nor is she in any wise daunted when she finds that the hall of Sir Alexander's house is filled with British officers who are hunting for the Prince as so many cats might seek some elusive mouse. Luckily enough Sir Alexander himself is not at home; but his wife, Lady MacDonald is there, and

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

to her the girl appeals for aid. Lady MacDonald is not proof against the enthusiasm and the beauty of Flora; she says nothing to the unsuspecting officers, and even goes to the length of sending food to the fugitive on the beach, by the hand of the Laird of Kingsburg. In truth, Lady MacDonald is in secret sympathy with the Jacobites. The sooner, she says, that the Prince gets away from such close proximity to the officers the better for his royal head, and for his aristocratic neck.

The Laird, Flora and the Prince hasten off towards Kingsburg. They are met by some country-people, who fail to recognize "Bonnie Charlie" in the person of the lank Irish maiden, Betsey Burke. When the house of the Laird is reached his wife kisses Flora and Betsey in hospitable fashion, but she is amazed to find that the latter has a suspiciously rough complexion. Can this Betsey be a bearded woman?

We are agreeably familiar with the end of the story. Flora, more and more charmed by the manners and bearing of the Prince, watches over his safety with unflinching devotion until he leaves Portaree. Charles Edward kisses her in farewell. "Gentle, faithful maiden," he cries; "I hope we shall yet meet in the Palace Royal!" That is the last Miss MacDonald will ever see of Charles Edward. There will never again be a Palace Royal for this descendant of the Stuarts. He will make good his escape to France, only to degenerate, as the years glide on, into a broken-down libertine. No Stuart will ever

## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

again disturb the peace of the sovereigns of the House of Hanover. Better for the fame of Charles Edward had he died when leading a forlorn hope at the Battle of Culloden.

Flora MacDonald will always think of him with passionate admiration, and perhaps with a more tender feeling. Who shall penetrate the hidden, inscrutable recesses of the feminine heart, which even a woman herself seldom understands? But Flora must soon have a care for her own life. She is arrested, brought to London, and shut up in the Tower, on the charge of high-treason in aiding and encompassing the flight of the Prince. Her future looks dark, but powerful friends, headed by Frederick, Prince of Wales, secure her release, and she becomes, for a short time, the spoiled darling of London's aristocracy. Then she has an audience with King George II, the very man whom Charles Edward tried to hurl from the English throne.

"How dared you give assistance to an enemy of the crown?" quizzically asks the King.

"It was no more than I would have done for your Majesty, had you been in a like situation," she answers adroitly.

His Majesty can reproach her no further after such a retort, wherein girlish simplicity and Scotch shrewdness have so peculiar a combination. She goes back to her home triumphantly, in a coach-and-four, and afterwards marries Allan MacDonald, son of the Laird of Kingsburg.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Two years before the breaking out of the American Revolution that most interestingly crusty of philosophers and hide-bound of American-haters, Dr. Samuel Johnson, visited the very house at Kingsburg in which the Prince had taken refuge under the guise of Betsey Burke. The good Doctor even had the honor of sleeping in the same bed wherein Charles Edward had rested, for one night, his young but tired bones. Johnson was not ill-pleased to enjoy the distinction. He was a bit of a snob at heart; association with Royalty, however remote, always charmed him. Perhaps that was why he had no sympathy with our own country when it was struggling to shake off the yoke of Royalty, as represented by the House of Hanover. "The Americans," he growled, "are a race of convicts, and should be thankful for anything they get short of hanging!"

After the collapse of the Rebellion of 1745, and the escape of the Prince to France, King George II pardoned a large number of Jacobites with the understanding that they should emigrate to the American colonies. This clemency was the cause of the Highland settlement upon the banks of Cape Fear River, North Carolina. It occupied a great space of land of which Fayetteville is now the centre. To this Scottish colony came Allan Macdonald in the year 1775, accompanied by his wife, her children, and a number of friends. The son of the old Laird of Kingsburg had sailed across the Atlantic to better his fortunes and find peace and contentment in the



## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

New World. But there could be little of peace in a land which was about to be convulsed by the throes of a mighty struggle. The Revolution was impending; men who would have preferred to till the ground, or engage in the budding commerce of the infant nation, were often obliged to range themselves on the side either of royalists or patriots. There could be no alternative, save for mean-spirited persons who tried to keep astride of the political fence, and hoped to descend, at last, upon the winning field.

There was nothing of the "trimmer" about either Allan MacDonald or Flora. They were both staunch Tories. Flora MacDonald had risked her life to save from imprisonment and death the scion of the House of Stuart, and now she was prepared to take almost as great a chance in upholding King George III., the grandson of Prince Charlie's rival.

It was not long before the chance came for the couple to show their preference. General Donald MacDonald, one of Flora's kinsmen, and a veteran who had fought on the side of Charles Edward in the battle of Culloden, was now a doughty adherent of King George. In the spring of 1776, when the delegates to the Continental Congress were meditating the untying of the bonds which held them to the mother country, Donald MacDonald sent forth a proclamation calling upon the Highlanders of North Carolina to join him in opposing the "rebels." Thereupon he erected the royal standard at

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Cross Creek, in that colony. How could Flora MacDonald resist the call of one who had drawn a sword, some thirty years before, in defense of Charles Edward? If her relative could hasten to the support of George III, why should not she? She saw not the wrongs under which the American patriots suffered; she only saw that Royalty, ever sacred in her eyes, was attacked.

In a twinkling the woman's heart swelled with all the enthusiasm which had animated it on that day, so long ago, when she had promised to save a princely outlaw. In her still handsome face was the ardor of past youth; in her breast was the old-time bravery. It was not enough that Allan MacDonald should join the forces of Donald MacDonald: she must go, too, and contribute her all towards infusing loyalty into the hearts of her fellow-Highlanders. Thus we have a spirited picture of the Scotch mother as she moves among the troops with words of cheer. It is a picture whose truth was once contradicted, but there is every reason to disbelieve the contradiction. Flora MacDonald could not have been within a hundred miles of soldiers whom she thought to be fighting for the right without going to them. The only wonder is that she did not insist upon enlisting, like some belligerent Amazon.

Yet all her enthusiasm was to come to naught. As she had suffered for her devotion to a prince, so would she suffer for her devotion to a king. At the battle of Moore's Creek the Highlanders were badly defeated by

## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

the Americans, and among those taken prisoners was Allan MacDonald. General Donald MacDonald, who had been too ill to take part in the engagement, was ignominiously captured; he was glad to wave in the air, and surrender to some "rebel" officers, his army commission. All his proclamations and fulminations against the patriots had ended in this humiliating episode.

Things went badly for Flora MacDonald after the defeat at Moore's Creek. She was out of joint with the times: the patriotic Carolinians looked upon her as a traitor, and pillaged her plantation, while her husband was a prisoner of war. Before Allan MacDonald was released she shook the dust of Democratic America from her feet, and set sail in a sloop bound for the old country. Her husband was to join her later in Scotland, as he did. They wanted to end their lives quietly in the Isle of Skye.

There was to be one more adventure for Flora MacDonald, however, ere she might settle down into a commonplace personage; once more was she to play the heroine. During the passage of the sloop across the Atlantic a French war-vessel hove into sight and trained her guns on the stranger bearing the British flag. There came the booming of cannon, the sharp whistling of balls, the crashing of timber, as shot and fire came vomiting from the Frenchman. The crew of the little sloop were almost paralyzed with fright at this sudden onslaught. Why should they fight back in return, they cried, only to be

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

sent to the bottom of the ocean for their pains? Were they about to surrender to the enemy? That seemed the only chance of saving themselves. Swish! How the canister went hissing over the vessel! A few more minutes of this sort of thing and the sloop must either strike her colors or sink forever!

One person, and a woman at that, preserved her wits and her courage. Upon the quarter-deck stood Flora MacDonald with flashing eyes and dauntless air. One of her arms was broken, and she was bleeding from a wound, but her spirit was as firm as ever. Seeing that her companions were about to yield, she cried out to them to be brave, and that the enemy might still be beaten. The crew, first surprised and then stimulated to sudden action, now turned the guns of the sloop on the Frenchman with such effect that the latter was at last driven off. Through all the fierce engagement we can hear the clear voice of Flora calling out "Courage!" or giving some direction. Such a creature was better fitted to play a royal part than were all the kings of the House of Stuart.

Where was the Captain of the sloop during the heat of the action? History does not tell us; to Flora alone belongs the honor of this engagement.

On a bleak March day of 1790 an immense crowd of Scotch people, some three thousand in all, could be seen wending their way slowly and mournfully to the cemetery of Kilmuir, in the Isle of Skye. A stranger might

## AN UNCOMPROMISING TORY

---

have supposed that a Royal personage was about to be buried. But it was a friend of Royalty, rather than Royalty itself, which reposed in the plain coffin in front of the rustic cortège. Flora MacDonald was dead—and her body had for a shroud the very sheets in which Prince Charlie had slept on the night he had taken refuge at Kingsburg. It had been Flora's own wish that this should be her covering. She had lived to be an old woman, but one vision never faded from her memory. It was the vision of a handsome young fellow, the picture of grace and chivalry, who had kissed her as he cried: "I hope we shall yet meet in the Palace Royal." It was well for the romantic quality of her enthusiasm that she never met the Prince in after years. Old age, intemperance, and profligacy, as combined in the person of her one-time hero, would not have proved alluring. Assuredly, had she obtained a latter-day view of this sovereign who might have been, she would never have been buried in that peculiar shroud.

In North Carolina the name of Flora MacDonald still calls up picturesque suggestions. She tried hard to worst us in our struggle for liberty, but she was a woman in a thousand. Let us be gallant enough to forgive her, and to hold her character in admiration.

"The town of Fayetteville," writes Mrs. Ellet, "covers the former metropolis of the Highland clans. It was surrounded by a sandy, barren country, sprinkled with

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

lofty pines, and the American home of Flora MacDonald stood in the midst of this waste. The place of her residence has been destroyed by fire; but her memory is still cherished in that locality, and the story of her romantic enthusiasm, intrepidity, and disinterested self-devotion, has extended into lands where in life she was unknown."



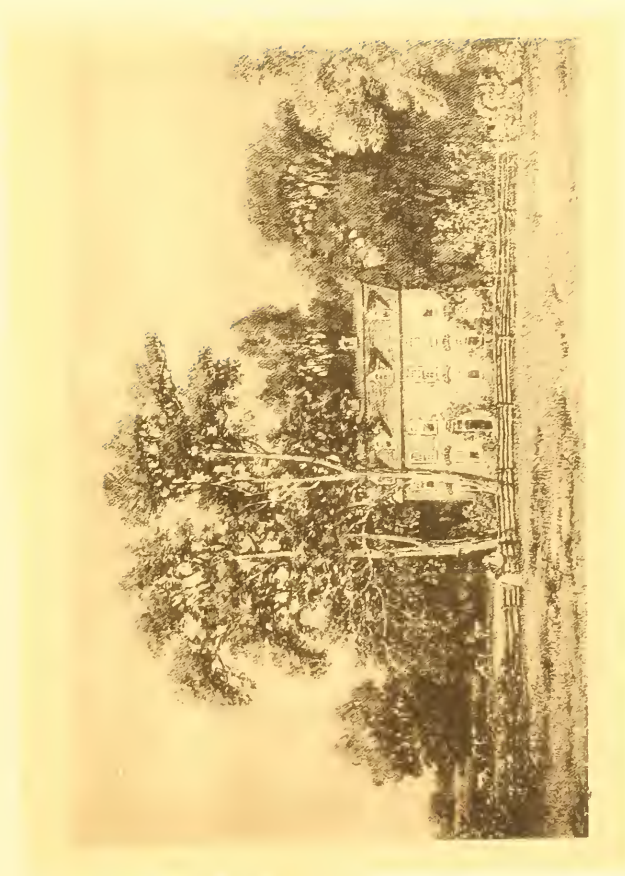


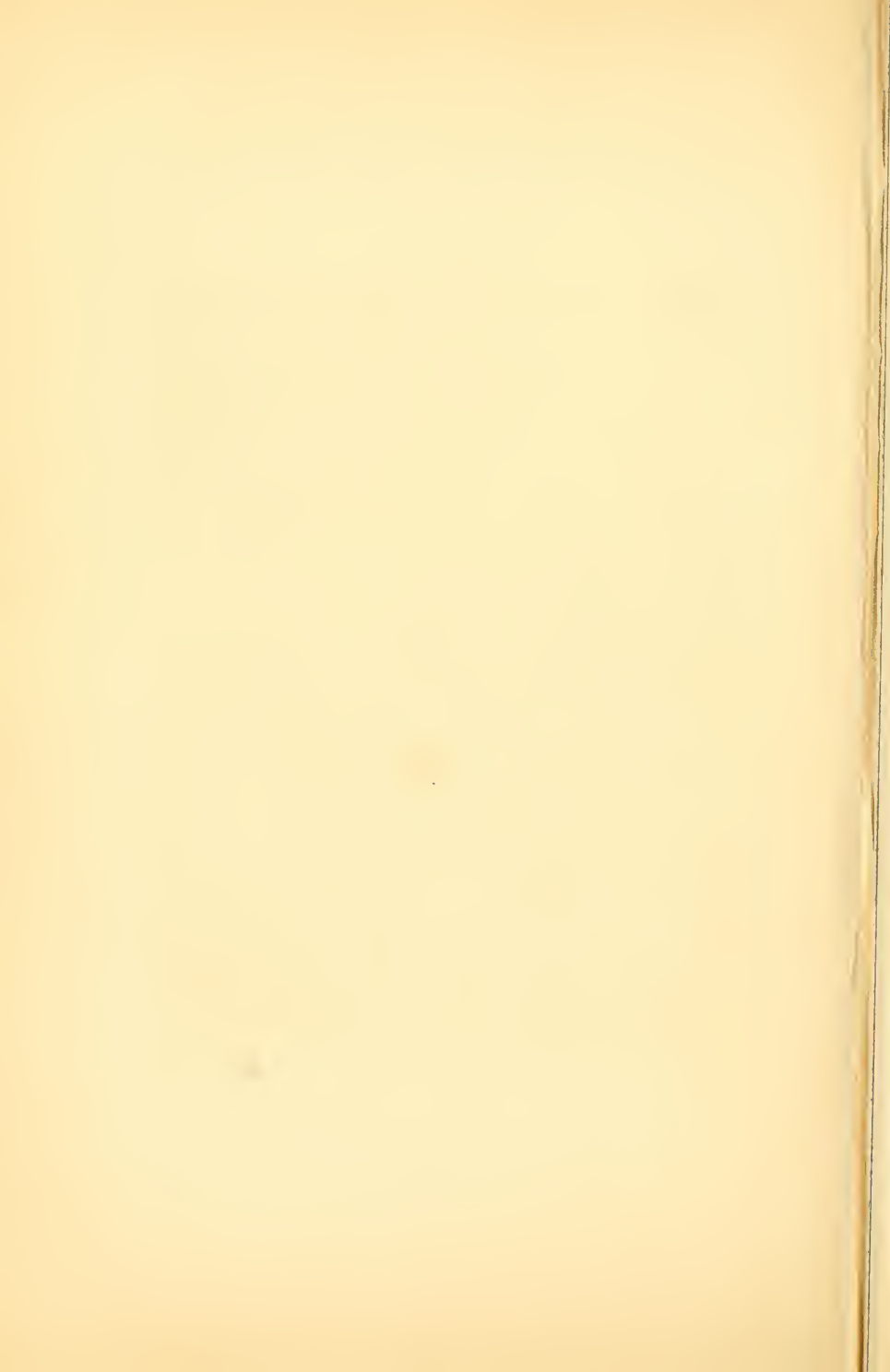


THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---







X

THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

GO out to the bustling village of Ambler, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, drive back into the country, in an almost easterly direction, for a distance of three or four miles, turn on an old-fashioned pike road, ask a great many questions from the natives, and circle around still to the eastward for a couple more miles—and then, if you are very brilliant, and have a largely developed bump of locality, you may find yourself looking at Graeme Park, the old home of Sir William Keith, one of the early Colonial Governors of Pennsylvania. The house, which now seems neither large nor imposing, is nothing more than an old-fashioned, plain brick structure. It suggests, for a human prototype, a once respectable gentleman who is slowly sinking to his grave in a state of fast-increasing shabbiness. You wonder whether you have not taken a deal of trouble and traveled a long distance, only to be disappointed. “Relics,” you think, “are not always what they are thought to be!” You begin to feel a sense of injury. You have been taken advantage of by some one.

But if you enter the residence, and peer into its nooks and corners, you are soon in the best of humors, if you

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

possess any power of imagination or any spirit of romance. The rooms are bare, to be sure, and there are few signs remaining of former luxury, yet the whole interior has an air of the past that proves delightfully attractive in that melancholy, pensive way that will be appreciated by all who love to roam through a deserted home. In yonder dining-room, with the curious fireplace, plump Benjamin Franklin has more than once grown pleasant over a glass of Madeira. In the wainscoted drawing-room some of Philadelphia's greatest belles have laughed and chatted with elegant beaux habited in rich velvet suits and silken stockings. In the great bedroom on the second floor Sir William Keith has slept uneasily as he saw, in his dreams, some bailiff breaking into the place to arrest him for debt. During a period of many years the now time-worn roof gave shelter, and the several hosts dispensed hospitality, to what was best in the social and political life of old Philadelphia. When we wander through the second-story, now used for a granary, and look out of the antiquated windows, we can fancy that we see that wonderful glass coach-and-four of Sir William's, which afforded such food for gossip to the farmers of the neighborhood. It rattles up to the front door, the proprietor alights, and comes stalking into the house. We can even imagine that there steals forth from the shelter of a neighboring sycamore-tree a seedy-looking individual who holds in his hand an unpaid bill, and who wonders whether he

## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

had better not wait to present it until the distinguished debtor has been put into mellow mood by a copious dinner. Surely, we say to ourselves, so interesting a house as this should contain a few well-regulated ghosts who walk through its deserted rooms at the mystic hour of midnight. Midnight is the accepted time for the promenade of spirits.

We ask the present owners of the property if they have ever detected any of these spirits making merry in the place. They smile and shake their heads in the negative. They, and their ancestors, the Penroses, have lived within a stone's throw of the old mansion for a hundred years, but never have any of them come across the faintest suggestion of a departed denizen of Graeme Park. So we must bring our own imagination into play to people the house with ghosts. Nor is it a difficult task. If Sir William Keith himself does not nightly revisit the place and flit from room to room in a weird endeavor to escape his creditors, then never let us put trust again in the respectable belief that any house of more than a century in age must be haunted.

Sir William was a fine example of the eighteenth century British aristocrat who drank his two quarts of wine at dinner, lived on the fat of the land—always greatly in excess of his income—and then, after there was no more money in the exchequer, died in poverty and obscurity. There were not a few such gentlemen who came to Pennsylvania in the old days and greatly shocked the

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

staid Quaker element by the lavishness of their households and the recklessness of their behavior. For while many a Friend in Philadelphia had a fondness for the good things of the table, and was not above sipping his Madeira on occasion, he could never forgive any one who spent money foolishly. The Quaker was the last man on earth to run up bills which he could not pay: he never trained for the almshouse. When he could not afford turtle, he did without it.

Sir William Keith was a Scotch baronet of noble lineage. While he was not at all successful in that important art of making "both ends meet," he possessed another art which stood him in good stead—that of winning friends to his side by courtly manners and the pleasant, if not altogether high-minded faculty of being "all things to all men." He had a certain magnetic power, as we would say in these days, and he could put at ease any one who came into his company, from the patrician to the meanest laborer. After having held some important position in the American colonies under the British Government, from which he was removed on the accession of George I, he drifted from Virginia to Philadelphia, and then secured the appointment of Deputy Governor of Pennsylvania. He brought his family over from England to the Quaker City, in 1717, after borrowing money for the expenses of the voyage, and soon built for himself a residence (the house of which we have already spoken) in Horsham Township, Mont-



## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

gomery County. From that time Sir William dispensed a lavish hospitality at his new country seat. Many were the Philadelphians who were glad to accept of it, and to admire, in return, his beautiful stepdaughter, Mistress Ann Diggs.

Ann Diggs was the daughter of Sir William's wife by a former marriage. She was soon married to Dr. Thomas Graeme, a kinsman of her stepfather's, and continued to live under the step-paternal roof. As the years sped onward, Sir William fell sadly into debt; his hospitality cost him dear; he returned to England and finished his once brilliant career by dying, in 1749, an imprisoned debtor in the Old Bailey. The fawning and cringing gentlemen who had so often feasted at his board had, ere this, quite forgotten him, unless it might be to refer in tones of contempt to a man who had spent money not wisely, but too well. We eat a spendthrift's dinners, and pat him on the back for his champagne and terrapin, but when the bailiff stands upon his door-step we turn our faces the other way. Poor Sir William must have often philosophized upon this sad fact as he looked at the iron gratings of the Old Bailey, and thought with bitterness of the Philadelphians who had been only too glad to doff their hats to him in the era of his prosperity. Little marvel, then, if his spirit returned to his old country-place in Montgomery County, to tread lightly through the scenes of his former grandeur.

After the death of Sir William we find Dr. Thomas

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Graeme and his wife in possession of the Keith home-  
stead, which has now been christened Graeme Park,  
where they give charitable shelter to Lady Keith, the  
widow of the unfortunate baronet. Dr. Graeme was a  
canny Scotch physician, who contrived to build up a  
large practice for himself in Philadelphia. As he grew  
old and health failed, he lived more and more at Graeme  
Park, and devoted himself to the care of Elizabeth, his  
youngest and favorite daughter. Fragile, pale, reflect-  
ive, and at the same time comely to behold, the girl was  
just the one to have a romantic career. And she had it;  
her whole life was romantic from the time that she fell  
in love with an unnamed Philadelphian until she died,  
an old woman, in the house of a friend in the neigh-  
borhood of the Graeme Park which she had loved so  
well.

Of Elizabeth's unfortunate love affair we know little or  
nothing except that we are led to believe that the swain  
proved unworthy. Perhaps he jilted her. Who can say?  
She was attractive and talented, but women of attractions  
and talents had been jilted before that time. Be that as  
it may, we are informed that Miss Graeme went to Scot-  
land to try, if possible, to forget the lover; and that to  
relieve her mind of its burden of grief she translated the  
whole of *Telemachus* into English verse. That was a  
solace in which the modern belle, who never sickens in  
the good old fashion from disappointed affection, would  
hardly be likely to indulge, despite the fact that the

## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

“new woman” is supposed to be far more intellectual than her sisters of past generations.

Elizabeth, however, was but human, after all. On her return from abroad she took the place of her mother, now dead, as the mistress of Graeme Park, and aided her father to attract to that seat all who had any pretensions to literary proficiency or fashion. At the table of father and daughter oftentimes sat such guests as the lovable and Reverend Mr. White, afterwards Bishop of Pennsylvania, Elias Boudinot, Dr. Witherspoon, Richard Stockton, and a host of others whose names were to go down into history. Then the girl—now a woman of thirty-three—so far forgot her first love as to yield her heart to a young Scottish adventurer of three and twenty, who affected a very strong sympathy with the intellectual pursuits of the hostess of Graeme Park. The youth was one Hugh Henry Ferguson; and despite his want of years he had a keen appreciation of the money bags and the landed property of Dr. Graeme.

So the two were married, albeit in strict secrecy. As it was a forgone conclusion that Dr. Graeme would not approve, the plan of young Ferguson was “marriage first, confession afterwards.” But when Ferguson proposed that the confession should come from his wife, who continued to live at Graeme Park, that poor lady shuddered at the thought. Although Dr. Graeme had been a fond father, there was no telling how the old gentleman might take this news. The bride in very fear

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

refused to say a word. "Then if you tell not your father yourself," cried the groom, who was anxious to make peace with the good Doctor and his banker's account as soon as possible, "*I shall tell him!*"

Thus adjured, there was nothing left for Mrs. Ferguson to do save to make the confession. Upon a cool autumn morning of 1772, as the father was taking his daily walk through the Park about an hour before breakfast, the poor woman (for poor is any woman who must tell how she has thrown herself away on a worthless fortune-hunter) crawled down-stairs and waited for Graeme's return.

"I sat on the bench at the window," she afterwards wrote, "and watched him coming up the avenue. It was a terrible task to perform. I was in agony; at every step he was approaching nearer!"

Then a strange, uncanny thing happened. As the frightened daughter sat near the window, trembling at the thought that another minute would bring her face to face with the Doctor, he suddenly reeled, stretched out his hands, as if for aid, and then fell dead upon the path. When his daughter reached him, the old man was beyond the hearing of any confession she might have made. It was well, perhaps, that he should die at this tragic moment. It almost seemed as if Providence had interposed to prevent a wretched scene between parent and child.

Mrs. Ferguson was plunged in grief at the Doctor's

## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

death, though her husband was, no doubt, more reconciled. Did not the worthy Graeme have some gold and silver to leave behind? And had not Mr. Ferguson the true old-world scent for a legacy? After the father had been buried with much honor, the daughter and her young husband settled down to dwell at Graeme Park, as if they were about to imitate the "once upon a time" lovers of a fairy tale, who always end by "living happily forever after." But the breaking out of the Revolution put an end to all the dreams which Elizabeth Ferguson had enjoyed. They were dreams of books, conjugal love, Arcadian pleasures, and elegant idleness. The peace of many an American home was destroyed by this bitter struggle, and Graeme Park was to prove no exception.

Ferguson was not slow in declaring himself a Tory, notwithstanding that he had an American wife and was being supported by American money. To him the patriots were merely misguided "rebels," only worthy of execution, and he saw no reason why the "insurrection" should not be quelled in a few months. He engaged in the British service, therefore, and gradually drifted away from his wife, to die, at last, fighting in the Flemish wars. Thus Mrs. Ferguson lost her young husband, and never learned to see that she had gained by the deprivation.

Poor woman! She had a great abundance of what old-fashioned authors called "sentiment." She dearly

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

loved her own country, but she quailed before the horrors of war. While many a fair American was urging her relatives to resist the aggressions and the arms of Britain, be the cost and the flow of blood what they might, Elizabeth Ferguson's one idea was to stop the carnage, and bring peace between the colonies and the mother-country. No wonder, then, that she did some very foolish things, out of mistaken zeal, and brought down upon herself the wrongful suspicion of being a traitor.

She loved animals of all kinds, were they birds, or dogs, or the beasts of the field. Why then, she reasoned, should man, the highest of all the animals, be subjected to the calamities of sword, fire, powder and bullets?

When the Rev. Mr. Duché, a faint-hearted Philadelphia clergyman, wrote to Washington suggesting that the cause of Independence was hopeless, and asking him to compromise with the British, Mrs. Ferguson undertook to be the bearer of the letter. Here, she thought, was a chance for her to bring this wretched conflict to a close. But Washington became as angry as it was possible for a man of so well-governed a temperament to be: he openly rebuked Duché, and plainly showed that he was nettled at the unseemly activity of the lady.

Under a date in October of 1777 Washington wrote to the President of Congress: "I yesterday, through the hands of Mrs. Ferguson, of Graham [*sic*] Park, received a letter of a very curious and extraordinary nature from Mr. Duché, which I have thought proper to transmit to

## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

Congress. To this ridiculous, illiberal performance, I made a short reply by desiring the bearer of it, if she should hereafter by any accident meet with Mr. Duché, to tell him I should have returned it unopened, if I had had any idea of the contents; observing at the same time that I highly disapproved the intercourse she seemed to have been carrying on, and expected it would be discontinued. Notwithstanding the author's assertion, I cannot but suspect that the measure did not originate with him; and that he was induced to it by the hope of establishing his interest and peace more effectually with the enemy."

Duché afterwards went to England. More than five years later, in seeking to pave a way for his return to America, the clergyman said, in an apologetic letter to Washington: "I cannot say a word in vindication of my conduct but this, that I had been for months before distressed with continual apprehensions for you and all my friends without the British lines. I looked upon all as gone; or that nothing could save you, but rescinding the Declaration of Independence. Upon this ground alone I presumed to speak; not to advise an act of base treachery; my soul would have recoiled from the thought; not to surrender your army, or betray the righteous cause of your country, but, at the head of that army, *supporting and supported by them*, to negotiate with Britain for our constitutional rights."

Duché returned to Philadelphia in 1792, and paid a

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

visit to President Washington, who "manifested generous sensibility" on perceiving that the poor gentleman had suffered from a slight stroke of paralysis.

Nothing daunted by her failure with the Duché letter, and still intent upon her ambition to end the war, Mrs. Ferguson was sentimental enough to enter into the schemes of Governor George Johnstone, one of the commissioners deputed by authority of Parliament to settle, if he could, the differences between America and Great Britain. "I should like," said Johnstone, in his unintentionally arrogant way, "to secure the influence of General Reed. If you should see him I should like you to convey the idea that if he could, conformably to his conscience and views of things, exert his influence to settle this dispute, he might command ten thousand guineas, and the best post under the English Government."

"I question," answered Mrs. Ferguson, "whether General Reed would not look upon such a mode of obtaining his influence as a bribe."

"No bribe, my dear Madame," said Johnstone, confidently. "Such a mode of proceeding is common in all such negotiations, and one may honorably make it a man's interest to step forth in Britain's cause."

In fine, Governor Johnstone was offering a bait which he himself, as a man of honor, would not have considered for one second. Mrs. Ferguson was at last induced, rather against her will, to ask for an interview with Reed.



## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

This she readily secured. When she had repeated to the General the proposition of Johnstone, the American replied: "I am not worth purchasing; but, such as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to do it!" The remark passed into history; from that moment any attempt at compromise proved unpopular, and was regarded as treason.

It soon leaked out that Mrs. Ferguson was the woman who had sought to "tamper" with General Reed, and the patriotic newspapers were quick to hold her up to public scorn. Congress took notice of the matter; the unfortunate mediator was reduced to tears. "I own I find it hard," she said plaintively, "knowing the uncorruptness of my own heart to be held out to the public as a tool to the [British] commissioners. But the impression is now made, and it is too late to recall it." Worse than all, it was even hinted that she had played her thankless part in order that her husband—whom she still loved with an ardor which he hardly deserved—might gain promotion in the British service. Then Johnstone, to cap the climax, tried to wriggle out of the whole matter by proclaiming on his return to England that he had been misquoted and misunderstood. It is but an example of the way in which many of the British treated the Americans, men and women alike, through the continuance of the whole struggle.

"Among the many mortifying insinuations that have been hinted on the subject," wailed the distracted Mrs.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

Ferguson, "none has so sensibly affected me as an intimation that some thought I acted a part, in consequence of certain expectations of a post, or some preferment from Mr. Johnstone, to be conferred on the person dearest to me on earth. On that head I shall say no more, but leave it to any person of common sense to determine, if I had any views of that kind, whether I should, in so full and solemn a manner, call in question what Mr. Johnstone has asserted in the House of Commons."

All of which shows that a woman, particularly one who knows more of books than of men, should never attempt to play the politician. Yet Mrs. Ferguson, who was looked upon with suspicion by many of her countrymen, had spun with her own hands a quantity of linen which she directed to be made into shirts for the American prisoners who had been brought into Philadelphia after the battle of Germantown.

There is something sad and pathetic in the end of the poor lady. She lost a great part of her fortune; and lost, too, the privilege of a home amid the trees and fields of Graeme Park. The two romances of her life—her love, first for an unworthy lover, and then for an unworthy husband—were sad indeed, and she was not sorry when the end came. She died in the house of a charitable friend near Graeme Park, in February of 1801. Surely her gentle spirit must pay an occasional visit to the home of her father.

Of the history of Graeme Park since its occupancy by

## THE GHOSTS OF GRAEME PARK

---

Elizabeth Ferguson there is nothing that needs the retelling. The old mansion itself, now sinking into decay, furnishes a chronicle and moral of the rise and fall of family grandeur. If we look at the unfurnished rooms we realize how quickly human glory may fade away. The place is a sermon in stone more strikingly illustrative than the discourses of a hundred ecclesiastics. But it is pleasant to reflect, if we are fond of the uncanny, that ghosts must frequent the house, gliding in and out the silent chambers and peering gloomily at one another. What a shadowy group to encounter! The elegantly-dressed Sir William Keith, his dainty wife, shrewd-eyed Dr. Graeme (if anything so ethereal as a spirit can look shrewd of eye), dignified Madame Graeme, unhappy Elizabeth Ferguson and her scheming Tory husband. "Scarcely any house in the colonies," observes Thomas Allen Glenn in his *Colonial Mansions*, "had a career more eventful, or sheltered at various times a greater number of distinguished persons, some of whom died rich and great, whilst others, equally talented, but less favored by that fickle jade, fortune, perished in obscurity and wretched poverty."







WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---









## XI

### WASHINGTON AS A WOOPER

---

TO the generality of Americans George Washington—yes, let us be frank enough to confess it—seems to have been a highly virtuous but utterly passionless figure in history, resourceful, great, even superhuman, but cold as the statue of some classic hero. We are prone to forget that the “Pater Patriæ,” as our great-grandfathers were fond of calling him, had his affections and emotions, like humbler persons. We often forget, too, that he had a youth, much as all others have had a youth, with its fancies, its illusions and its little romances. It is a pity to put him on too high a pedestal, for thereby we are only turning one of the most interesting men in the annals of the Anglo-Saxon world into an unnatural, stupid automaton who always did the right thing in the right place simply because he could not help himself. The more human we find George Washington to be, the more strongly do his self-control and honesty of purpose stand out before us in a clear, powerful light.

Yet it is only when we study the early life of Washington that we get satisfactory glimpses of this humanity. Then we detect the inner character of the man before he

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

has enveloped himself in a mask of impenetrable will-power. Later on we may catch a brief glance of his impetuosity, so often curbed or hidden altogether, when he is swearing like a trooper at General Lee on the field of Monmouth, or angrily striking a blundering artilleryman with the flat of his sword in a marsh near Gulf Mills. But these are only occasional flashes of fire. If we would see George Washington in a truly romantic guise we must take him at the susceptible age when he was wont to sigh, like any other swain, for pretty maidens who frowned upon his love.

For the matter of that, as the late Paul Leicester Ford has truly pointed out, "during the whole of his life Washington had a soft heart for women, and especially for good-looking ones," and was more at ease with them than in his relations with his own sex. But as time went on he placed a break, as it were, upon his sensations, so that he could calmly write, not so very long before his death: "Love may and therefore ought to be under the guidance of reason, for although we cannot avoid first impressions we may assuredly place them under guard."

This copy-book maxim was one that the future "Pater Patriæ" did not always follow out in the days of his youth, when he was ready to offer his hand and heart to the first pretty girl who chanced to cross his path. Perhaps more than one of those girls lived to reproach herself, in after years, that she had not smiled on the man

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

who was to occupy one of the proudest positions in history.

One day, when still a schoolboy in Virginia, young George was caught "romping" with "one of the largest girls" in the class, while at the mature age of sixteen he was "hopelessly" in love with a "Lowland Beauty," as he called her, whose name has never been authoritatively learned. "My place of residence," he wrote to a correspondent from the plantation of his patron, Lord Fairfax, "is at present at His Lordship's, where I might, was my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there's a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house (Colonel George Fairfax's wife's sister), but as that's only adding fuel to fire it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being in company with her revives my former Passion for your Low Land Beauty, whereas was I to live retired from young women I might in some measure alleviate [*sic*] my sorrows by burying that chaste [*sic*] and troublesome Passion in the grave of oblivion or eternal forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured that's the only antidote or remedy that I shall be releivd [relieved] by or only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced was I ever to attempt anything I should only get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness."

How charmingly quaint and old-fashioned is this wail from the heart; how like is it to the budding love-sickness of any other healthy lad, and therefore how attract-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

ive it seems. Yet through it all shines, albeit faintly, that prudent spirit which in after years would help to make Washington one of the most careful men of a not too careful age. If he can only get away from feminine society, he thinks, he might forget the "Lowland Beauty." But as he is not yet much of a philosopher he goes on loving the "Beauty" until some other belle usurps her place in his roving affections. He even takes to reading and writing poetry and pens in a book these heated, unpunctuated lines:

"O ye gods, why should my Poor Resistless Heart  
Stand to oppose thy might and Power  
At last surrender to Cupid's feathered Dart  
And now Lays Bleeding every Hour  
For her that's Pityless of my grief and Woes  
And will not on me Pity take  
He sleep amongst my most inveterate Foes  
And with gladness never wish to wake  
In deluding sleepings let my Eyelids close  
That in an enraptured Dream I may  
In a soft lulling sleep and gentle repose  
Possess those joys denied by Day."

At the same fervid period he inscribes an acrostic upon the fair name of Frances Alexander, the daughter of a planter living in the neighborhood of Mount Vernon. It starts off impetuously:

"From your bright, sparkling eyes I was undone ;  
Rays, you have ; more transparent than the sun."

Fancy the august President Washington, and try to

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

compare him to the ardent Romeo who sighs and talks about "transparent rays" or "bright, sparkling eyes"! It is only by such glimpses as these that we learn to know the true Washington, and to admire him all the more because of his undercurrent of strong, fibrous humanity.

At the age of nineteen our hero had so far forgotten several of his earlier loves as to cultivate another "hopeless" and equally unrequited passion for Miss Betsey Fauntleroy, a young Virginian of undoubted charm. Miss Betsey, indeed, was so cruel as to present the poor fellow with the proverbial mitten, and to accompany the unwelcome gift, no doubt, with kindly remarks of a sisterly but wholly unamorous nature. Yet Washington, who had even then the quality of obstinacy, determined not to be discouraged. He resolved to try Mistress Fauntleroy again, and to shake, if possible, that obduracy which would make him miserable for life if she persevered in it. So he wrote a letter to one of her family, explaining that he had been suffering from pleurisy, but promising himself the pleasure of once more storming the Fauntleroy fortress. "I propose, as soon as I recover my strength," he said, "to wait on Miss Betsey in hopes of a revocation of the former cruel sentence, and see if I can meet with any alteration in my favor."

Miss Betsey was not, however, to be won over. She refused George Washington, and he was left to console himself by gazing on some other pretty face. This he

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

did, in short order, and soon found that he contrived to keep quite cheerful in spite of the hard-heartedness of the young lady. It is even said that he went so far in his amours as to fall desperately in love with the wife of his friend, George William Fairfax. It is probable, however, that his intimacy with Mistress Fairfax was perfectly innocent, and went no further than the respectful homage which he always paid, even after his marriage, to a handsome woman.<sup>1</sup>

The most earnest of all Washington's love affairs, saving the one which made him the husband of Martha Custis, was that of which the elegant Mary Philipse, the sister of Mrs. Beverley Robinson, was the unresponsive heroine. It was in 1756, when he was twenty-four years old, and rejoicing in a new-made military glory, that he fell a victim—so, at least, says Dame Tradition—to the charms of this lady. He had first electrified Virginia by his now famous expedition against the French, and his defense of Fort Necessity; afterwards the young officer had behaved with the greatest bravery during the terrible defeat of General Braddock near Fort Duquesne. All the colonies had rung with accounts of his gallantry, which seemed all the more conspicuous because it showed out to the astonished world in strange contrast to the cowardice of many of the English regular troops. Poor Braddock, like the narrow-minded general that he was, had affected to despise the provincial soldiers, and to

<sup>1</sup>*Vide The True George Washington.*



## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

boast of what his Englishmen would do when the time came for action against the French and Indians. But when that time did come, it was the provincials who had the most nerve; the English ran "like sheep pursued by dogs." Washington himself rode here, there, and everywhere trying to help the officers in bringing order out of panic, as the bullets whistled merrily around him. When he returned unhurt to Virginia his friends declared that he must lead a charmed life, in thus escaping from the dangers of the wilderness, while an eloquent clergyman predicted that God, in having preserved the hero, was intending him for greater service to his country in the future. Many a story was told of the youth, during the winter after the massacre near Fort Duquesne, as the planters sat smoking near their blazing fires, and the wind, sounding like the cries of the Indians who had fallen upon the soldiers, came screaming down the great chimneys. Children listened as their fathers related how Washington had often warned Braddock to beware of ambuscades; how the General had scouted the very thought that his precious English regulars would be frightened by "rascally" Indians; how he had sneered, too, when wily Benjamin Franklin had ventured to say that it was no safe thing for a long, thin, unprotected column of soldiers to wind through pathless forests, with hostile redskins hovering near. Then the planters would lower their voices, and the children would shudder with a sort of painful pleasure, while the melancholy sequel to

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

all this warning had recital in dramatic tones. As the troops marched bravely through the woods to capture Duquesne they were fallen upon by Indians and French hidden in dangerous ravines, and many of the English were slaughtered as if they had been rats in a trap. Then the story-tellers, stirring up the flaming logs, would describe the wounding of Braddock, his pathetic despair as he saw, when too late, that the day was lost by his own rashness—and then his death, followed by a forest burial with Washington reading the service of the Church of England. It made a fine tale. Many a little chap took his candle, and went up to his cold room in fear, trembling as he fancied that the wind without was nothing less than an army of Indians waiting to break into the house, to tomahawk the whole family.

It was the prestige resulting from this bravery under Braddock that caused Washington to be treated with welcome civilities during a trip he made to Boston on horseback in 1756. The young Colonel was now commander-in-chief of the provincial troops of Virginia, and he journeyed to Boston to interview General Shirley on some military business. On his way he tarried in New York, where he was lavishly entertained by Beverley Robinson, one of his friends who was to develop into a Tory after the breaking out of the Revolution because he would disapprove of independence.

No one now had a thought of Revolution or independence. All Americans were good loyalists, and Colonel

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

Washington drank daily to the health of old King George II, as fervently as did the most hide-bound Briton. And when Mr. Robinson lifted his glass at dinner, with the accompanying sentiment of "To His Majesty," Washington could not foretell that in less than twenty years he would himself be engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the grandson of this self-same "Majesty."

One thing, however, the Colonel did see, and that very plainly. There sat at the Robinson table Miss Mary Philipse, the sister of the hostess, and as she was both young and handsome, with a fascinating manner wherein dignity and cordiality had peculiar mixture, the Virginian found an occasional look at her face, and a gallant remark dropped in her ear now and then, a very pleasant occupation. Miss Philipse, in turn, admired the fine martial bearing of this tall militia officer. She was quite willing that he should say complimentary things to her, particularly when he reinforced them by bows of the most scrupulous good breeding. She appreciated breeding, for she was the daughter of Frederick Philipse, lord of the manor of Philipseborough, and had been brought up in a manner befitting a girl who seemed destined to play a brilliant social part in the colonies.

For the—was it the tenth or the twentieth—time in his life Washington was completely, "hopelessly" in love. The charms of Mary Philipse were too much for his equanimity. He was obliged to push on at once to Boston, but he resolved that he would pay a visit under

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

the hospitable roof-tree of the Robinsons on his return journey to Virginia. He was soon back in New York, and there is a legend which says that on a certain afternoon he sat in deep converse with the charmer long after it was time for the Robinson servants to light the candles. Did he propose to her in the twilight? Was he refused? To these questions the legend answers "Yes." At last the Colonel rode away, and never saw Miss Philipse again until she had become the wife of Captain Roger Morris, of the British Army. After Washington had reached Virginia a friend wrote to him that if he wished to win Miss Philipse he should hurry North as there was "a rival in the field." But he did not ride back to New York. Probably he knew the exertion would be useless.

The after years of Mary Morris were in almost tragic contrast to those of the man whom she was believed to have refused. Roger Morris remained loyal to the British Army during the Revolution, and his wife, who clung to his fortunes, or rather his misfortunes, was attainted for treason. She died in England when ninety-six years old, many years after the remains of Washington had been consigned to the tomb. It is interesting, if somewhat idle, to speculate as to what would have happened had Mary Philipse married George Washington. She was a Tory by birth and instinct, and she was likewise a woman who exerted a strong influence over those with whom she was brought into association. It has been hinted that had she been the wife of the Virginian

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

she might have turned him into a Royalist, and thus changed the pages of history. Yet to have altered the convictions of such a man, and swerved him from what he thought the path of duty, would have required a power which, in all probability, no woman in the colonies possessed. For, as any student of masculine human nature will admit, it is one thing for a strong man to fall in love with a pretty face, and quite another thing for the same man to live under the dominion of the same pretty face. "Washington could not have been a *traitor* [*i. e.*, a patriot] with such a wife as Aunt Morris," said one of her nephews, more than half a century ago. But we beg leave to disagree with this uncompromising Tory.

After having been refused by more than one American, it is a pleasure to find Washington in the rôle of a successful lover with the Widow Custis. The only wonder is that a young fellow who possessed so keen an admiration for the fair sex should not have been accepted previously by a "Lowland Beauty," a Betsey Fauntleroy or a Mary Philipse. However, we know that the gallant Colonel had plain sailing into the heart of Martha Custis. Perhaps experience had made him wiser.

Martha Washington began life as Martha Dandridge, the daughter of a good family which long before her birth had emigrated into the colony of Virginia. At the early age of sixteen she was one of the belles of Williamsburg, the capital of the colony; at seventeen she had

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

married Colonel Daniel Parke Custis, a prosperous planter on the banks of the Pamunkey River. She was soon left a widow with a fine fortune for consolation. This fortune she managed with great business skill, considering that she lived in an age when women were supposed to know nothing about business. Her other worldly possessions included two fine children and unmistakable good looks. She now had what the old-fashioned chronicler poetically terms "the full bloom of beauty." Her neighbors soon began to ask themselves, with much wise nodding of heads, whether the *châtelaine* of the "White House" would not soon look around for another helpmate who would be glad to manage her estate.

The months rolled on, and still Madame Custis remained single. At last, in 1758, a tall, imposing officer, attired in military undress, and accompanied by a body-servant, crossed Williams's Ferry, over the Pamunkey River, on his way from Winchester to Williamsburg on official business. When the ferry-boat touched the Southern or New Kent side of the stream the gentleman, who was none other than Colonel Washington, was accosted by a Mr. Chamberlayne, a hospitable person living in the neighborhood, who is described as the beau ideal of the Virginian of the old régime—"the very soul of kindness and hospitality."

"You must stop at my house for the night, Mr. Washington," insisted Mr. Chamberlayne.

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

"It is impossible," answered the Colonel, bowing politely. "I have important business at Williamsburg."

"Ah," protested Chamberlayne; "you must dine with me at the very least." And the would-be host added, with a merry twinkle in his eye, that he would introduce the Colonel to a "young and charming widow" who happened to be paying a visit to his family. So the Colonel, overwhelmed by the insistent kindness of the Virginian, accepted the invitation to dine, although he announced that he must continue his journey before nightfall. When the two reached the Chamberlayne house, Washington was presented to its occupants, including Martha Custis, the "young and charming widow."

The afternoon which the Colonel passed with the widow has become historic. He forgot sweet Mary Philipse, with whom he had tarried so long in much the same way that he was now delaying with the pretty widow. He made up his mind that Mrs. Custis was delightful; while she in turn smiled graciously upon one of whose prodigious valor she had heard many flattering stories. The sun went down, and the Colonel so far forgot his good resolutions to continue his ride as to consent to spend the night at Mr. Chamberlayne's house. "No guest," said the host, who began to see which way Cupid was shooting his arrows, "ever leaves my mansion after sunset." This particular guest made no demur. Williamsburg could not melt away; the town would still be in existence if he arrived there a trifle behind time.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

The next day, we are told, was far advanced when "the enamored soldier was on the road to Williamsburg." As soon as he could get away from the Virginian capital he hastened back to see the widow, and with what results all the world knows. It soon began to be whispered around in New Kent County that Madame Custis was to marry the young officer, who was now the sole owner of the Mount Vernon estate. More than one colonist vowed that George Washington was a "shrewd fellow." So the couple were married and "lived happily forever after." Washington sighed no more for "Lowland Beauties," or for beauties of any other kind, and although he never lost his keen relish for a pretty face, he made a loyal, chivalrous husband. There is no doubt, despite certain sneers, that he had, from the first, a warm affection for his wife. It was nothing to his discredit if the lady chanced to have a comfortable fortune, which he was able to manage skilfully and with prudence.

Mrs. Washington shines out through the vanishing twilight of the past as a worthy, matronly woman, who proved to be just the wife a man like Washington needed. She was a capital housewife and a well-bred hostess. Although she had a little temper of her own, and was very human, she yet had vast tact and sagacity. A wife who talked too much might have ruined the influence of the General, while a bluestocking who tried to meddle in statecraft would surely have quarreled with him. But Martha Washington was energetic without being



## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

gossipy, and housewifely without being dull. It is well for America, therefore, that the "Pater Patriæ" did not win a sprightly Fauntleroy or an implacable Mary Philipse. "Mrs. Washington appeared to me one of the best women in the world," wrote the Marquis de Chastellux, and no better epitaph than that can be found for the loyal wife who helped America by helping her husband.

Shortly before passing away, Mrs. Washington destroyed all but one of her collection of letters written to herself by the General. The one that she spared, which refers to his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army, contains a sincere tribute of affection. "You may believe me, my dear Patsy," he says, "when I assure you in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part from you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. . . . I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg, that you will summon your whole fortitude and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satis-

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

faction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen."

Perhaps Washington was not so anxious to avoid the command of the army as he hints in this letter; but of his regret at being obliged to leave his wife there can be no possible shadow of doubt. The good lady, however, saw not a little of her lord and master during the long war. She accompanied the General to the lines before Boston, and witnessed its siege and evacuation, before returning to Mount Vernon. At the close of each campaign thereafter an aid-de-camp repaired to her home to conduct the mistress to her husband's headquarters. The arrival of the aid-de-camp at headquarters, "escorting the plain chariot with the neat postilions in their scarlet and white liveries was deemed an epoch in the army, and served to diffuse a cheering influence amid the gloom which hung over our destinies." Lady Washington always remained at the headquarters till the opening of the campaign, and often remarked, in after life, that it had been her fortune to hear the first cannon at the opening, and the last at the closing of all the campaigns of the Revolutionary War.

Think of the letters which Mrs. Washington destroyed. "What fine reading they would have made!" exclaims the modern biographer in tones of regret. Is it always "fine reading" to have matrimonial confidences exhibited for public inspection? The modern biographer per-

## WASHINGTON AS A WOOER

---

haps would not hesitate to publish the secrets of his own mother, if they had any commercial value. The venerable mistress of Mount Vernon was wise in her generation.







A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---





A Q U A K E R T R A N S F O R M E D

**T**HE Quaker, or, to use a more technical term, the Friend, has great powers of adaptability. Put him into a situation, where polish or even elegance is called for, and he is seldom if ever found wanting. That is because the Quaker has a worldly side as well as a spiritual side, and possesses a keen knowledge of how to behave under the most trying and the most unusual circumstances.

Let us take, for example, the career of Dolly Madison, otherwise Dolly Todd, or Dorothy Payne. This attractive American, who lived to win the hearts of two husbands, and to become the "First Lady of the Land," as mistress of the White House, was born in the then far-away province of North Carolina, in the year 1768. She bid fair, at that time, to develop into nothing more startling than a country maiden who would know how to spin, to make curds and whey, and sew industriously at the garments of some yeoman spouse. "In truth," says Maud Wilder Goodwin, in her blithesome biography of Mistress Madison, "no one could have looked less frivolous than this demure schoolgirl with the sober gown reaching to the toes of her shoes, the long gloves

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

covering her dimpled elbows, and the linen mask and broad-brimmed bonnet hiding her rosy face. Yet an eye trained to fortune-telling might perchance have caught a glimpse of a glittering chain about the white neck under the close-pinned kerchief, and guessed the guilty secret of hidden finery which it held, and which gave the lie to the profession of a renounced vanity which her garb suggested."

From the first, indeed, Miss Dolly Payne was fond of dress—one of those welcome sins from which the best of women are by no means exempt—and she showed this amiable weakness to her life's end. She was named Dorothea in honor of Dorothea Spotswood Dandridge, granddaughter of Governor Alexander Spotswood, who afterwards became the second wife of the silver-tongued Patrick Henry. Dolly Payne's father, John Payne, junior, was a gentleman born, of English and Scotch extraction, and had married the daughter of an Irishman. Consequently the little girl had the blood of the three ancient kingdoms coursing through her veins, while the Celtic strain, with its vivacity, was well accentuated, despite her Quaker training and traditions. Her eyes were merry, her hair black and curling, her complexion brilliant, and her facile tongue suggested an ancestry "not unacquainted with the groves and the magic stone of Blarney."

Dolly was the eldest daughter of a large family living in Hanover County, Virginia, whither her father had

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

gone, to superintend his plantation, shortly after her birth. Here she learned the mysterious arts of housewifery, and such intellectual accomplishments—not many, it must be confessed—as it was the custom to impart to feminine minds in those colonial days. In the meantime John Payne, her father, found that the Quaker faith was not duly appreciated in old Virginia, and he longed passionately for the more congenial surroundings of Philadelphia; in Pennsylvania a Friend was not looked upon as an anomaly in religion. At last he determined to take up his habitation on the banks of the peaceful Delaware, and he began his preparations for removal by setting at liberty all his slaves. To do this was to deprive himself of a very substantial portion of his property. But John Payne had the conscience of an Abolitionist of later years, though, unlike some of the latter, he had a great deal to lose by yielding to that conscience. It is one thing to demand freedom for slaves when you have none of your own, and quite another thing to cry for the same freedom when negroes form a goodly part of your worldly possessions.

It was in 1783, after the successful close of the Revolution, that the Payne family arrived in Philadelphia. Miss Dolly was then a sprightly young lady of about the same age that Miss Sally Wister was when she penned her famous diary for Miss Deborah Norris. Philadelphia was then a prosperous town of more than thirty thousand souls, with the Quaker element much more in

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

prominence than it became in after years. Although there was a bit of Old World luxury and a good deal of fine dressing among the aristocrats of the town, including the Chews, the Willings, the Binghamms, the McKeanes, and the Cadwaladers, broad-brimmed hats and poke-bonnets were still in the ascendency. It is not surprising, therefore, that John Payne found the place quite to his liking, or that he soon became prominent as a "Public Friend," or lay preacher. If one will take the trouble, when in Philadelphia, to walk to the southwest corner of Fifth and Arch Streets he will there see the old Free Quaker Meeting House (afterwards used for the Apprentices' Free Library and now devoted to the prosaic purposes of trade) wherein the Paynes worshiped on many a First Day after their own impressively simple fashion. Who shall assert that during the exhortations of her father, or of some equally eloquent preacher, the mind of Miss Dolly did not stray from the things of the next world to the good times which she hoped to have in this one? For she was already as much of a belle as any demure Quaker girl was allowed to be, and many were the young Philadelphia swains who gazed, not altogether unblushingly, upon her violet eyes and wealth of black curls. She was truly a most charming Quakeress, whose religion seemed to be more of an accident of birth or the result of training than a matter of conscientious conviction. Indeed, had it not been that many Quaker maidens were quite as human and as full of life

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

as their sisters of the Church of England or of other faiths, her vivacity and impulsiveness might have been regarded as an anomaly. But youth is youth all the world over; one cannot make winter out of spring; a girlish heart beats as spryly under a sedate waist of drab or gray as it does beneath the jeweled bodice of a Court beauty.

Any one who cared to study Dolly Payne's character at this formative period must have wondered whether the child, who was now developing into womanhood, would be content with the quiet life of a Friend, or whether she would some day draft for herself a declaration of social independence, and plunge headlong into the gay world which revolved about her so swiftly, so temptingly. It seemed for a time as if she were fated to pursue the even tenor of her ways, and settle down, at last, into the placid, God-fearing life of a Quaker matron. For, before she reached her twenty-second year, there appeared upon her domestic horizon the drab-coated figure of a certain Mr. John Todd, junior, who sought her hand in solemn, ceremonious fashion. After some delay he was as solemnly and ceremoniously accepted. The delay was occasioned, as the story goes, by Miss Dolly's announcing pertly that she never meant to marry; nor is it likely that she saw anything romantic in uniting herself to this, her first wooer. Mr. Todd was a Friend, like herself, and a young fellow of unimpeachable worth, yet unimpeachable worth does not always prove the best road to a

woman's heart. A little more dash, even with a little less worth, might have made the suitor far more attractive in the eyes of the young lady. However, she relented, in due course, and was married to John Todd (1790) with as much *éclat* as the Quaker ceremony would permit. This *éclat* was, of course, not overpowering. For her there could be, as an after entertainment, neither dancing, nor romping, nor the drinking of innumerable toasts to bride and groom.

It was naturally to be supposed that a match inaugurated in such a commonplace, unemotional way would result in a long, commonplace but tranquil married life about which there would be nothing striking, or picturesque, or tragical. But it is folly to prophesy regarding so uncertain a thing as matrimony. The married life of the Todds was to have a finale at once pathetic and heroic enough to do duty for the ending of a novel.

It is a day in the summer of 1793, and a mother lies in the room of a house on South Fourth Street, near Chestnut, in Philadelphia. With her is a mite of a boy, her second born. The mother is Mrs. John Todd. The man who bends over her, to look into the plump face of the child, is her husband. He is prospering, as a lawyer, beyond his expectations, and all the signs promise a brilliant career. But what words are on the trembling lips of some men who are passing on the street outside? "Yellow Fever!" "Yellow Fever?" Yes! Several Philadelphians have died of the dreaded disease, and the

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

one fearful question now is: "Will it spread?" And it is a question, too, that John Todd has already begun to ask himself, even though he has not dared breathe it to his wife.

As the days go on the dreaded thing fastens its grip upon the city. Hundreds of citizens are stricken down, to die in a few hours like dogs, and a dull fear, to be followed by a ghastly panic, hangs pall-like over the town once so serene and healthy. Neighbors fear to look upon one another, lest they catch the fever; funerals increase; bells toll; business is suspended; King Death reigns supreme. Soon there is a mad rush to get away from the polluted place. Any man who has a wagon, or who can beg, borrow or buy one, drives his family out into the country, as far away as possible from the awful Visitor. John Todd cannot allow his wife and children to perish. So he takes them, his wife on a litter, to the then sylvan spot known as Gray's Ferry, and he himself bravely returns to Philadelphia to do what he can for the stricken city. Here he is met by the death of his mother and father, who fall victims to the relentless plague. Dolly Todd sends tearful messages to him, begging him to join her at Gray's Ferry, and to save his own life. He must stay long enough in Philadelphia, he says, to help his friends and clients—then, and not until then, will he leave the town.

At last John Todd, having faithfully done his duty to his neighbor, returns to Gray's Ferry, but with the seeds

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

of the fever lurking in his system. The brave man sickens and dies, after but a few days' illness; Dolly Todd, who has been reckless enough to throw herself into her husband's arms upon his arrival, also takes the fever. For three weeks her life is despaired of; the physician shakes his head; he has no hope. Perhaps, in her delirium, the poor woman cries out for Death to release her, for now her new-born child has followed his father across the dark river.

After a time the plague, satisfied with so ample a harvest, released its clutch upon suffering Philadelphia. People began to return to town. Among them came Mrs. Todd, who looked, and felt indeed, quite heart-broken. It hardly seemed as if she could ever again "take notice," as old time gossips were wont to say of so many youthful widows. John Todd had bequeathed his meagre estate to Dolly, whom he called in his will "the dear wife of my bosom, and first and only woman upon whom my all and only affections were placed." So, with little or no worldly means, there was but one thing left for the widow to do. That she did pluckily, and thus, unconsciously paved the way for all her future splendor. She took her first-born boy, and went to help her mother keep a little Philadelphia boarding-house. Old Mr. Payne, Dolly's father, had died a ruined man, financially speaking, so that the other members of the Payne family, who had learned the rules of hospitality in open-hearted Virginia, were now obliged to exercise the



## A Q U A K E R T R A N S F O R M E D

---

same hospitality at so much per head. And it must be admitted that in the exercise of this virtue the stricken Dolly aided materially, for she began to "take notice" with a suddenness that must have surprised some of her friends. Yet it would have required half a hundred tons of iron to crush a woman whom Nature had endowed with such a perpetual flow of animal spirits.

Now it chanced that in 1794 there was living under Mrs. Payne's roof a gentleman who was later to play a prominent and discreditable part in the history of his country. This was Aaron Burr, a future Vice-President of the United States and the future slayer of the noble Alexander Hamilton. At present, however, Colonel Burr was a shrewd statesman, who took part in the deliberations of Congress, now sitting in Philadelphia, and who was distinguished for his charming manners, as well as for the silly way in which he was worshiped by some emotional females. Dolly Todd, however, was not one of those emotional females. Mistress Todd was already something of a woman of the world, so it is safe to infer that she had a fairly good understanding of the character of this slippery patriot. Nor does it appear that Burr lost his heart, if he ever had such a piece of anatomy, over the attractions of the sparkling widow. On the contrary, he was trying to make a match between her and a friend of his, and doing it with as much zest in the work as if he had been some designing mamma.

This friend was, of course, James Madison, of Virginia,

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

who had already done much to serve his country, and who was destined to do still more by becoming one of her Presidents. He was a staid, ungraceful little bachelor of over forty, who had experienced one unsuccessful love affair a few years before, when a Long Island maiden followed up her first acceptance of his addresses by jilting him in the most ignominious way for a musically-inclined parson. The parson was a clever fellow, for he hung around the young lady whenever she played the harpsichord—a bit of gallantry of which the solemn Madison would have been quite incapable—and wheedled his way so effectively into her heart that she soon sent the statesman to the right-about.

But Time, the great consoler of hapless lovers, gradually effaced from James Madison's mind the image of this cruel damsel. The consequence was that when he came to Philadelphia, and saw from a distance the sweet complexion and lovely eyes of Dolly Todd, he was seized with a sudden desire to be "presented" to the lady. He confided his wish to Colonel Burr, who promptly, and, no doubt, with a degree of pleasant roguishness, informed Mistress Todd that she had made a conquest. Whereupon the latter wrote to a friend that "the great little Madison has asked to be brought to see me this evening." Come he did that very night, accompanied by Colonel Burr, for introducer. Before he left the parlor of Mrs. Payne's modest boarding-house the great Virginian had forgotten the Long Island flirt so completely that she

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

might never have existed. He was undeniably, if perhaps awkwardly, in love with blooming Dolly Todd. No one was more alive to the fact than the volatile widow herself. "The two men who bowed before her in the candle-lighted parlor of her mother's house on that night were singularly unlike in appearance as in character. . . . Burr was full of grace, of charm, of vivacity, with mobile, expressive features, and an eye potent to sway men against their will, and women to their undoing. Madison was slow, unimpassioned, and unmagnetic, yet with a twinkle in his mild eye which bespoke a dry humor. . . . Burr was a Senator, while Madison was in the lower house, having been defeated in the contest for the seat of Senator from Virginia. In this case, as in so many others, however, the race was not destined to be to the swift, and the man who was to be at the head of the nation in the future days was not the brilliant, versatile, unscrupulous Burr, but the slow and steadfast Madison."<sup>1</sup>

It was not long ere Mistress Washington, wife of our first President, who then held high social sway in the official residence on the south side of Market Street below Sixth,<sup>2</sup> sent for Mistress Todd to enquire if it were surety that the widow was engaged to marry Mr. Madison. Mistress Todd blushingly acknowledged the soft impeachment, whereat Martha Washington, followed by

<sup>1</sup> Dolly Madison, by Maud Wilder Goodwin.

<sup>2</sup> A tablet marks the building covering the site of the mansion.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

the President, was graciously pleased to offer most sincere congratulations. "He will make you a good husband," said the First Lady of the Land. She spoke as a true prophetess. The social world of Philadelphia soon knew that Dolly, the one-time wife of the industrious John Todd, was to marry James Madison.

It was arranged, after mature deliberation, that the wedding ceremony should take place at Harewood, Virginia, the home of Dolly's sister, Mrs. George Steptoe Washington. Mr. Madison, accompanied by the future bride and her little son, with her child-sister, Anna Payne, (who was to act as a sort of infantile chaperon), spent a pleasant week in reaching Harewood. Here the middle-aged bachelor and the young widow were quietly married on a day in September, of 1794. Madison shone resplendent in a gorgeous suit well set off by ruffles of Mechlin lace, while the costume of the bride was anything but Quaker-like. The ceremony was performed by a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and was followed by a merry dance. How shocked Dolly's staid father would have been! Thus ended Dolly Payne's Quaker life, which had sat but lightly on her from the beginning.

The honeymoon, as had been determined, was to be spent at Montpellier, one of Madison's plantations, in Orange County, Virginia, and to this lovely portion of country the newly married couple started in a substantial coach-and-four. Here they passed a few happy weeks;

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

but we soon find them back again in Philadelphia. It was a gay life that certain upper-class Philadelphians led in those days. It was almost as gay, proportionately, as the life of many Philadelphians of to-day, despite the enormous increase in wealth and luxury which the years have brought. For be it remembered that the Quaker City was the temporary capital of the infant nation, and therefore attracted to it many gilt-laced foreign diplomats and other persons of distinction who appeared quite out of harmony with the old-time simplicity of the town. They would have appeared strangely out of harmony with it, too, had it not been that this old-time simplicity was fast vanishing. The Quaker element was slowly losing its power and prestige, as it gradually gave way to more worldly, or at least more elaborate, ideas and manners. Dancing, as practised at the "Assemblies," was now looked upon as an innocent pastime rather than as an invention of the Evil One; the picturesque Quaker costume was rapidly becoming the exception rather than the rule. In short, Philadelphia had acquired a certain cosmopolitan air and attractiveness which unfortunately it lost, when the national capital was removed to the then desert District of Columbia. Into this new society of the Quaker City came Monsieur de Talleyrand, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, of the high-sounding title, the Spanish Marquis D'Yrujo, and other illustrious gentlemen who enjoyed themselves very much in sipping the Madeira and eating the provender of their hosts, even

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

though they, in their foreign hearts, may have considered the aforesaid hosts a trifle provincial. They were polite enough, however, to these old-time Philadelphians, both before their faces and behind their backs, and in this they form a delightful contrast to some other foreigners who have visited this country in more recent times.

It was into this pleasant Philadelphia society that Dolly Madison plunged, after her honeymoon, with the energy of a child who is at last let loose in a much-coveted playground. She became popular at once, not because she had any wonderful brilliancy of conversation, but rather because of her great tact, her skill in placing all those about her at their ease, her gentle flattery, which made her friends feel the more important in her presence, and a certain quality which may be set down, for want of a better name, as personal magnetism. Her contemporaries never pretended that Dolly Madison was a genius or a "woman of mind," but they instinctively admired and praised her engaging manner, her tact and resourcefulness. These traits account for her remarkable social success, and for the beneficial influence which she exerted in behalf of her truly devoted husband. Perhaps, in her own way, Mistress Madison was as wise as any of her friends. She knew her limitations, and was shrewd enough to win applause without trying to go beyond them, or to make undue pretenses.

Washington was succeeded in the Presidency by testy, honest John Adams; next in the autumn of 1800, the

## A Q U A K E R T R A N S F O R M E D

---

seat of government was removed to Washington; the following spring witnessed the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson as third President of the United States. How the heart of Dolly Madison thrilled, to be sure, when the bitter contest for the Chief Magistracy between Aaron Burr and Jefferson at last resulted in the installation of the latter; for Madison became Secretary of State, while Dolly was not only the wife of the secretary but, furthermore, a lady who was oftentimes called upon to play the principal rôle in the entertainments at the new White House. Jefferson was a widower, his daughters were not living in Washington, and he sadly needed some one to do the honors for him.

Although he was a man of breeding and a thorough gentleman, he ever affected a democratic bearing—"Jeffersonian simplicity" it was called—that seemed at times strained to the verge of absurdity. Political expediency was at the bottom of it all.

We hear amusing stories about some of this "simplicity," in one of which Mistress Madison was an important, albeit unwilling factor. There was in Washington, as Minister from the Court of Saint James, a certain Anthony Merry, a pompous, punctilious Englishman who was a great stickler about the breeding of others, but who had little of that important quality himself. This diplomat had already taken offense at what he chose to consider the insulting way in which the President had received him at the White House. Mr. Jefferson's shoes,

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

as it appears, were not buckled with enough care to suit Minister Merry's fastidious taste, and it was complained that the clothes of the President were arranged with "studied negligence"—in short, that the whole scene was gotten up for the purpose of slighting Great Britain in the person of her august representative. Accordingly Mr. Merry insisted that the President was all sorts of things except a gentleman, and the tongues of the people of Washington wagged like bell-clappers.

The ill-feeling, however, did not stop here. Mrs. Merry was soon embroiled in the matter. By invitation of Mr. Jefferson she accompanied her husband to the White House one afternoon, to dine with all the other foreign ministers and their wives. When the guests were assembled in one of the parlors, and the servants had announced dinner, Mr. Jefferson rose and looked around him. "Of course," thought Mrs. Merry, who considered herself the most distinguished woman present because her husband represented Great Britain, "the President will take me into the dining-room." The President, however, did nothing of the kind. Men twisted their necks; ladies stared and then exchanged meaning glances with one another. Mrs. Merry looked like a thunder-cloud; Mr. Merry was furious, and not polite enough to hide the fact. The President had offered his arm to Mrs. Madison, and was escorting her out to the dining-room, despite the signs and motions which she was making; for the latter was trying to induce Mr.



## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

Jefferson to give his arm to Mrs. Merry. He was, however, purposely blind to the hint; Mrs. Merry had to yield the honor to the charming Dolly. Perhaps the President might have been a little more gracious to these foreigners had the Merrys not been so extremely and annoyingly anxious that every possible attention should be shown to them.

During all her social success in Washington, Mrs. Madison went on strengthening the hands of her husband, politically speaking, by making hundreds of friends for herself, and, therefore, for Madison. Through it all she still retained that lack of ostentation which characterized her early social life. Being a lady born, she bore her honors more simply than did certain other women who afterwards found themselves, temporarily, very great personages at the infant capital. One anecdote pleasantly serves to show how, although no longer a Friend, she still preserved a saving bit of Quaker humility. On a visit to Philadelphia she chanced to see an old lady, a shopkeeper, whom she had known when she was the girl, Dolly Payne. The wife of the Secretary of State insisted upon going up-stairs, to a room just above the shop, to drink a cup of tea with the old lady, and there the two sat for many a delightful minute, as they talked so volubly about old times in Philadelphia that there was no chance for any one else to get in a single word.

But greater honors awaited this unassuming lady. In

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

March of 1809, James Madison became President of the United States, in succession to Jefferson. Mrs. Madison was now the centre of all the gayety of Washington. We get a glimpse of her first reception at the White House, and see there the tall, ungraceful figure of Jefferson, who has determined to lend such *éclat* as an ex-President can to this entertainment. He glides here, there, everywhere, with his expressive face shining with the spirit of good humor. The women crowd around him, to see the last of the hero who is about to vanish from public life. "You see, they *will* follow you!" laughs a companion. "That is as it should be," says the ex-President gaily, "since I am too old to follow them. I remember when Dr. Franklin's friends were taking leave of him in France, the ladies almost smothered him with embraces. On his introducing me to them as his successor, I told them that among the rest of his privileges I wished he would transfer this one to me; but he answered: 'No, no; you are too young a man!'"

Meanwhile, Mrs. Madison welcomes her guests with the cordiality that has made her famous. But she keeps one eye on her husband, who looks careworn, as if loaded down by the sense of his coming responsibilities. For, however prosaic may have been the affection of this bright little woman for James Madison when she first married him, her love for him now is nothing short of middle-aged romance. Much as she cares for the world

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

of dinners and bright clothes, her fondness for them is as nothing compared with her love for the new President.

During the second term of Madison we have a far different and quite a melodramatic glimpse of the "First Lady of the Land." It is in the summer of 1814, when the war between England and the United States is in progress, and the British are threatening the very capital itself. The American force which must defend the city is ridiculously small. The excitement in Washington is intense. It is said that the British officers have sworn that they will dine at the White House and make their bows in the drawing-room of Mistress Madison. What is to be done? There is panic in the air. Money, valuables, important documents are hurried in wagons across the Potomac to Virginia; the more timid Washingtonians make hasty preparations to leave the place, if it comes to the worst, and confusion reigns supreme.

President Madison is at Bladensburg, a short distance from Washington, where the Americans are trying, unsuccessfully, to stem the tide of British invasion. While there he spends most of his time in writing notes to his wife, whom he has left in the White House, and seems more exercised for her safety than for the safety of all the rest of the Capital's inhabitants. "He enquired anxiously," writes Mrs. Madison to her sister, under date of August 23d, "whether I had courage and firmness to remain in the Presidential house till his return, and on

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

my assurance that I had no fear but for him and the success of our army, he left me, beseeching me to take care of myself and of the Cabinet papers, public and private. I have since received two dispatches from him, written with a pencil. The last is alarming, because he desires I should be ready at a moment's warning to enter my carriage and leave the city; that the enemy seemed stronger than had been reported, and that it might happen that they would reach the city with intention to destroy it. . . . I am accordingly ready. . . . French John [a servant], with his usual activity and resolution, offers to spike the cannon at the gate, and to lay a train of powder which would blow up the British should they enter the house. To the last proposition I positively object, without being able, however, to make him understand why all advantages in war may not be taken."

The next day the loyal-hearted lady thus writes: "Will you believe it, my sister, we have had a battle or skirmish near Bladensburg, and I am still here within sound of the cannon! Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect him! Two messengers, covered with dust, come to bid me fly; but I wait for him. . . . Our kind friend, Mr. Carroll, has come to hasten my departure, and is in a very bad humor with me because I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. This process was found too tedious for these

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken and the canvas taken out. It is done, and the precious portrait is placed in the hands of two gentlemen of New York for safe-keeping.<sup>1</sup> And now, dear sister, I must leave this house, or the retreating army will make me a prisoner in it, by filling up the road I am directed to take. When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be tomorrow, I cannot tell."

On this very morning the steward of the White House has planned a dinner for three o'clock the same afternoon. The wine has been placed in the coolers, for members of the Cabinet are expected to grace the Presidential board. Great men must eat and drink sometimes, in spite of panics. It is just about dinner-time when a negro who has accompanied Madison to Bladensburg gallops madly up to the White House, as he waves his hat and cries out: "Clear out! Clear out! General Armstrong [Secretary of War] has ordered a retreat!"

At once all is confusion. Mrs. Madison orders her carriage, and as she passes through the dining-room, grasps what she can crowd into her reticule. Then, when the chariot is brought up to the door, she quickly jumps in, accompanied by a maid and one other companion, and is rapidly driven over to the Georgetown Heights. "Mrs. Madison," relates a contemporary, "slept that night at Mrs. Love's, two or three miles over the river. After

<sup>1</sup> The portrait of Washington was safely hidden in a house near Georgetown.

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

leaving that place, she called in at a house and went upstairs. The lady of the house, learning who she was, became furious, and went to the stairs and screamed out: 'Mrs. Madison, if that's you, come down, and go out! Your husband has got mine out fighting, and d—— you, you shan't stay in my house. So get out!'"

Thus Dolly Madison learned, for once, how adversity can change the warmth of one's reception. A week before the swearing virago would have groveled at the feet of the President's wife. But Mrs. Madison, taking the lesson with both philosophy and good breeding, left the house at once and lodged elsewhere.

It was not long after her hasty exit from the White House that the enemy's troops entered Washington. They behaved in a way that must always leave a blot on the record of British arms. When the Capital had been set on fire, some of the officers proceeded to the White House, where, after doing full justice to the dinner awaiting the absent Cabinet, they stole a vast quantity of wine from the cellars, and then lighted a bonfire of furniture in one of the parlors. But there is no need to repeat further the story of vandalism. War is not always conducted upon chivalrous lines.

The wanderings of the Madisons during the comparatively few hours that the British held carnival in Washington have become a part of American history. How Mrs. Madison had literally to beg for shelter in an inn; how her husband, looking more like a fugitive from

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

justice than the President of these great United States, turned up at this same inn; how she forgot all her troubles in having him near her; how Madison at length fled out into the raging storm, because the British were supposed to be hunting him as hounds might hunt a criminal; how he spent the night in a miserable hut in the forest;—all these things we recall as we review the history of the War of 1812. It must be confessed that the worthy President does not make a heroic figure amid this excitement. The statesman cannot always play the bold commander.

In a short time Washington was evacuated by the British. The Madisons hurried back to the White House, to find it in charred ruins. Ere long the tide of victory turned in favor of the Americans. Then came peace, with the ringing of church bells, the booming of cannon, and much brilliancy of illumination. A great many persons on both sides of the ocean were glad that the war was over. Thus life went on until Madison finished his second term as President, and with his wife retired to the peaceful shades of Montpelier. Here, for many a pleasant year, they led the placid life of a high-bred Virginia couple. Here Madison studied, read and thought of the stirring events of the past; here Mrs. Madison tended her wonderful garden and dispensed a hospitality at once lavish and gracious. When the two used to talk over the fall of Aaron Burr—his killing of Alexander Hamilton, and his treason against his own country—they must have

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

had at least one grateful thought for the one-time friend who had made them known to each other in the parlor of Mrs. Payne's boarding-house. Over the front door of the Montpellier mansion might have been inscribed: "Love grows with the years."

One might have supposed, indeed, that the Madisons were youthful lovers, to judge from the letters they wrote one to the other during the occasional trips which the husband took to Charlottesville. One letter reads as though old Mrs. Madison—it is hard to think of Dolly as old, is it not?—had but just been wedded. It runs:

*"Monday, Nine O'clock.*

"My Beloved,—I trust in God that you are well again, as your letters assure me you are. How bitterly I regret not going with you! Yours of Friday midday did not reach me till last evening. I felt so full of fear that you might relapse that I hastened to pack a few cloaths and give orders for the carriage to be ready and the post waited for. This morning, happily the messenger has returned with your letter of yesterday, which revives my heart and leads me to hope you will be up at home on Wednesday night with your own affectionate nurse. If business should detain you longer—or you should feel unwell again, let me come for you. . . . I hope you received my last of Thursday containing letters and papers. My mind is so anxiously occupied about you that I cannot write. May angels guard thee, my dear best friend!  
D—."

It was in the summer of 1836 that Madison, who had become a helpless, rheumatic invalid, died with a harmless jest upon his lips. A servant had brought him his



## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

breakfast, but he could not swallow it. "What is the matter, Uncle James?" asked a niece who was with him. "Nothing more, my dear, than a change of *mind*," he answered. Then his head dropped upon his chest, and he ceased to breathe "as quietly as the snuff of a candle goes out."

No need to tell of the sorrow which came into the widow's life. It was to her as if the sun had ceased to shine. But she was a brave woman, and the world could never quite lose its charm for one endowed with such a healthy, normal mind.

During the last eleven or twelve years of Mrs. Madison's life we see her living with a niece once more in Washington, not far from the White House, and as if by right—becoming once more a distinct queen of society! She is now a woman of over seventy; but, though she may dress in rather an antique costume, she attends a ball as gayly as if she were a girl of eighteen. "What a difference twenty years makes in society," she says once, as she peers at the Washingtonians who are dancing around her. "Here are young men and women not born when I left the capital, whose names are familiar, but whose faces are unknown to me." And all the while the youngest-spirited person in the room is Mistress Dolly Madison! Indeed, she never cares to look upon herself as an old woman; years do not count where the heart is kept young. Yet with all her cheerfulness she has had troubles which would have killed any less

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

volatile creature; for that worthless child of hers, Payne Todd, spendthrift and gambler, has forced her to sell Montpellier, and is always making demands on her purse that almost reduce her to the ranks of a pauper.

Through it all the dear old lady holds levees, to which all the great people flock, much as if she were still the wife of the President. We see her at one of these entertainments, erect and dignified, with the impressiveness of a true Virginia *grande dame* of olden time. She is dressed in purple velvet, with plain straight skirt amply gathered to a tight waist, cut low and filled in with soft tulle. Her throat, still white and unwrinkled, is encircled by a lace *cravatte*, fastened with an amethyst pin. On her head is a wonderful turban, made of some silky material; over her shoulders is thrown a little lace shawl or cape. There are two bunches of very *black* curls on either side of the smooth brow, which seems almost like that of a young girl. The violet-blue eyes are full of sparkle, and mirror laughter; the mouth is smiling; the complexion is as soft and pretty as might be the complexion of a girl. Such is the venerable Mistress Madison, enjoying this world until the last, yet never forgetting her husband, who has gone to that other world of which we know so little. She is a true philosopher, if ever woman was, enjoying all that her life offers; she can take pleasure in a levee, crowded with American notabilities and foreign dignitaries, and she can take pleasure, too, in the memory of James Madison. Even that

## A QUAKER TRANSFORMED

---

worthless son, who will soon descend to a dishonored, unmourned grave, cannot crush the marvelous spirit.

With all her love of existence Dolly Madison has within her a certain spiritual quality which tells her that the things of this earth are not, after all, so very important. Perhaps that quality has been inherited from the Society of Friends. She becomes more interested in religion as old age increases: at last the Episcopalian Bishop of Maryland baptizes and then confirms her, according to the beautiful ritual of his church. "There is nothing in this world really worth caring for," she says gently, towards the end.

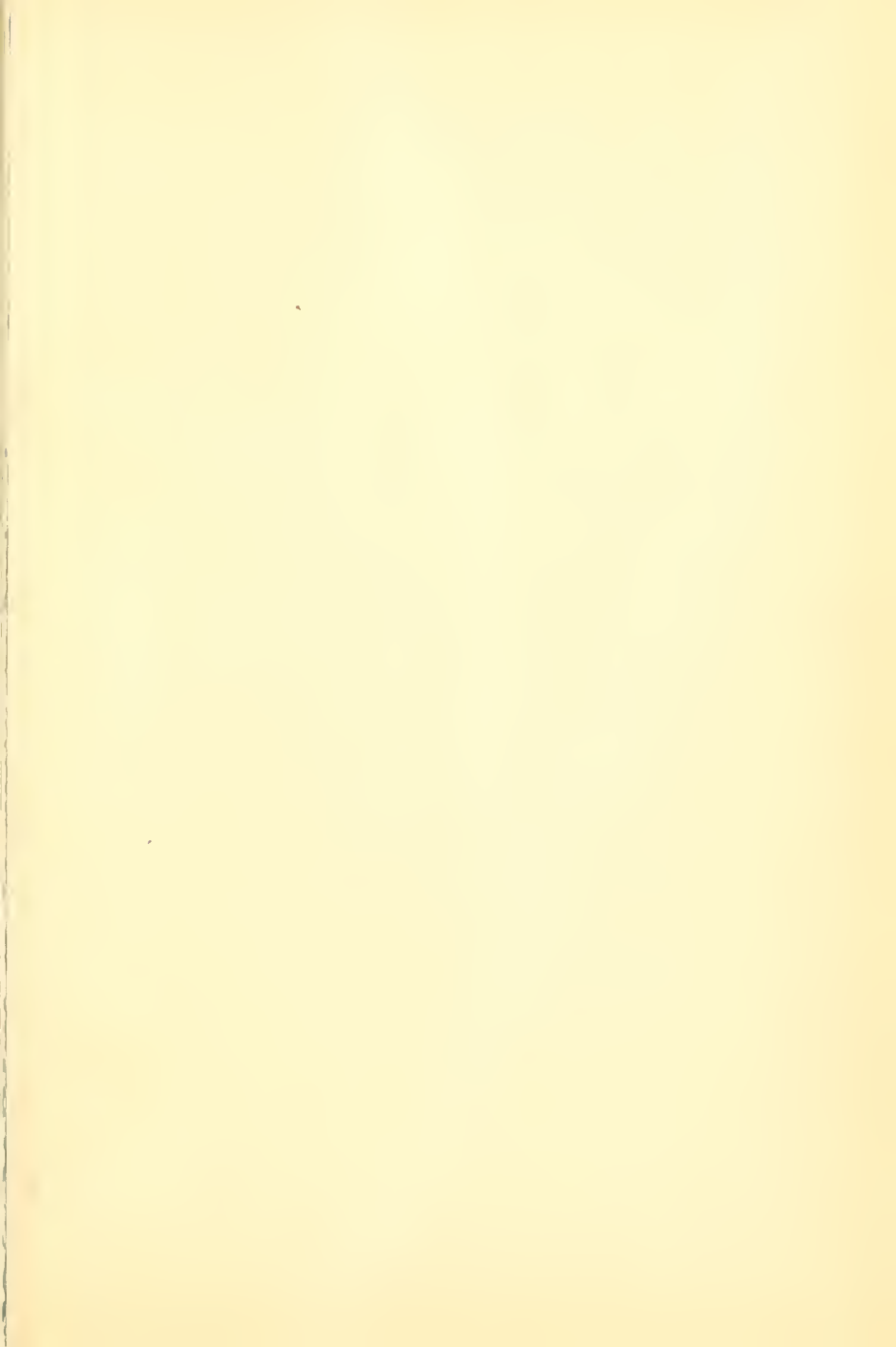
It is a day in July, of 1849. Mrs. Madison is ill, but listening to a chapter from the New Testament. As she lies there, drinking in the words whose spirit seems so far away from all the worldliness of the past, she falls into a peaceful sleep. It is her last sleep on this troublous planet. In two more days she is dead. When the people of Washington hear of her passing away, they can do nothing but speak her praise. She who had kind thoughts for many has, in return, many a kind thought bestowed upon her. She is given a public funeral, as befits the wife of a patriot, and to it come the President, members of the Cabinet, the Diplomatic Corps, Senators, Representatives, officers of the Army and Navy, and many more, of high and low degree. On her grave in a local cemetery flowers are strewn as emblems of that bloom of life which had never left her. A few years later

## ROMANCES OF EARLY AMERICA

---

the body of Dolly Madison is placed by the side of her husband at Montpellier.

It is fitting that the wife should lie so near the well-loved husband. The courtship between the two may have lacked picturesqueness, but their married life proved to be a true romance which only deepened in intensity as the twilight of old age crept gently over them. Would that all other romances might end as serenely!













LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 006 747 028 A